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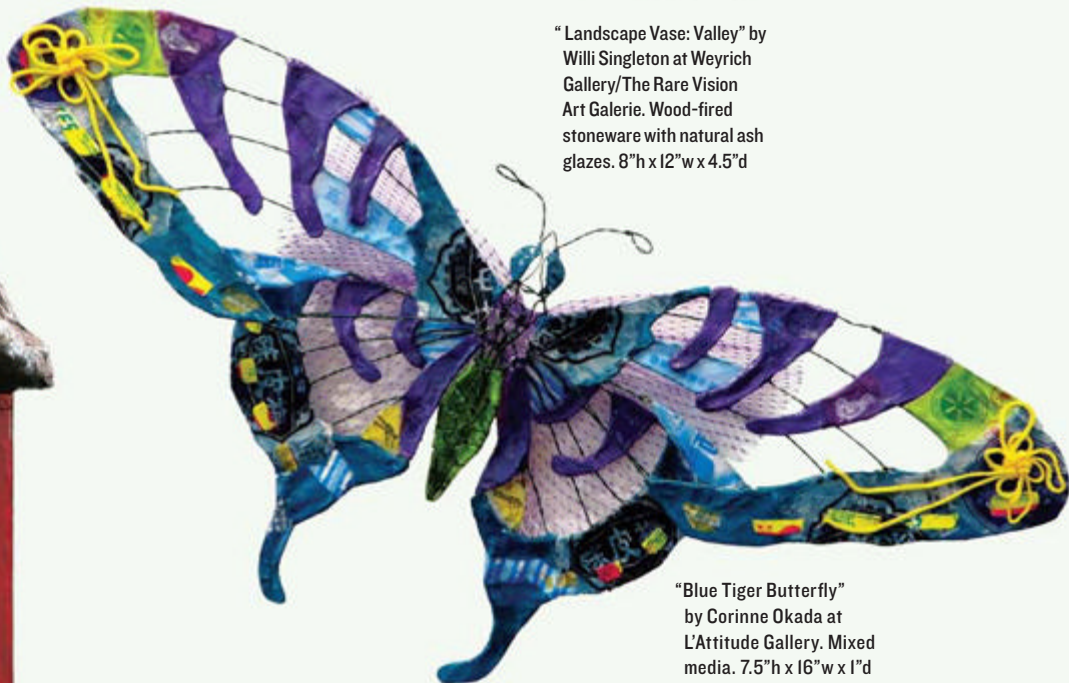
CØNTEMPØRARY CRAFT —



"Holding Onto Innocence"
by Jacqueline Hurlbert at
White Bird Gallery. Ceramic
sculpture with wood
base. 26"h x 7"w x 7"d



"Landscape Vase: Valley" by
Willi Singleton at Weyrich
Gallery/The Rare Vision
Art Galerie. Wood-fired
stoneware with natural ash
glazes. 8"h x 12"w x 4.5"d



"Blue Tiger Butterfly"
by Corinne Okada at
L'Attitude Gallery. Mixed
media. 7.5"h x 16"w x 1"d

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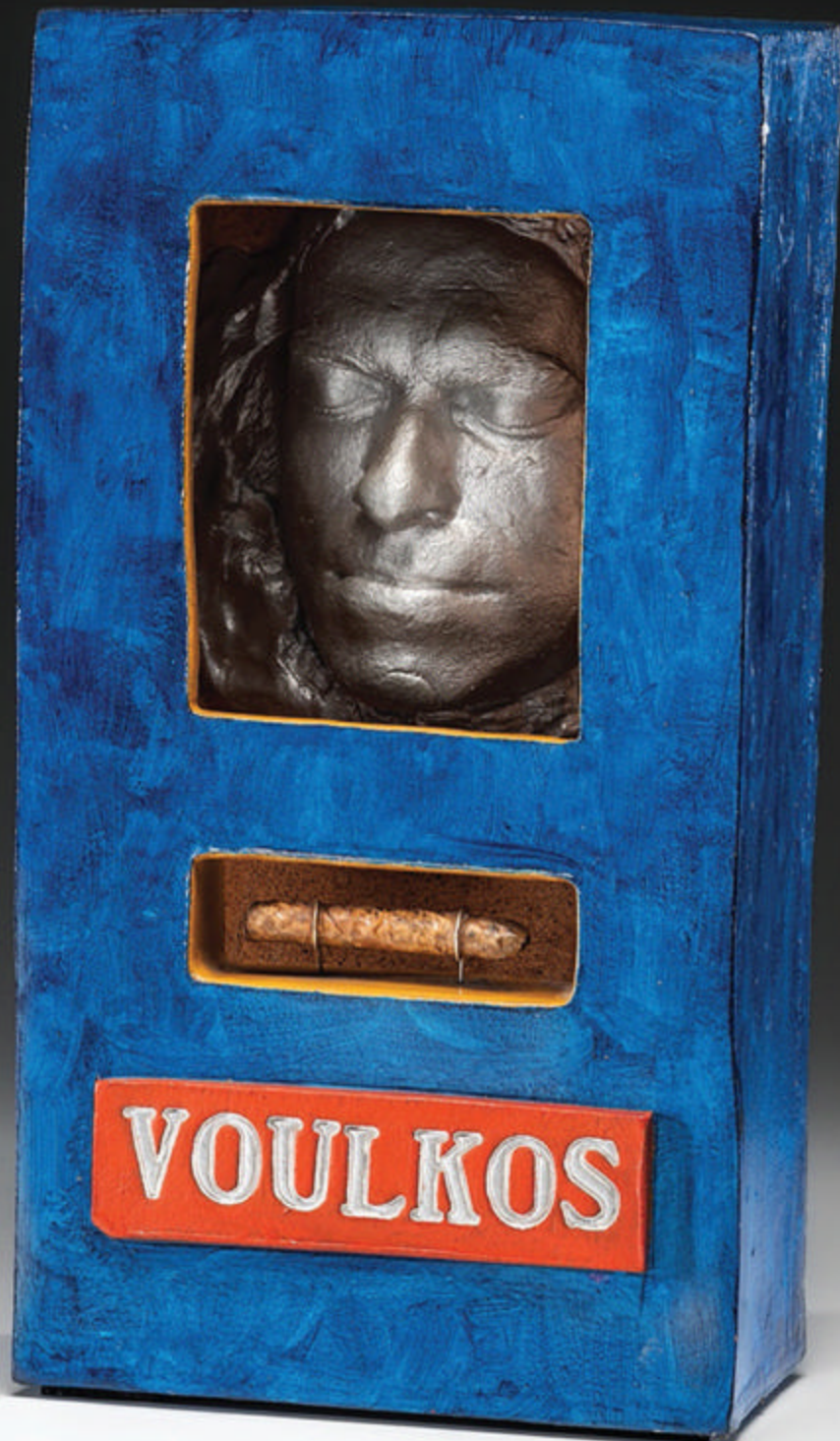
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From the Editor

Are you a risk-taker?

010

Letters

Readers chime in.

014

Zoom

Whitney Artell's lush, layered weavings and Walnut Studiolo's leap into leather. Plus: Fiercely Made redefines retail; behind the scenes at the 500-acre Storm King Art Center; three noteworthy books (including *The Manly Art of Knitting*); a collection of goods that bring the outside in; spring-time shows to see; and readers answer: What are the most unexpected materials you've used in your work?

028

Material Matters

Digital design and fabrication tools have given jewelry artist Maria Eife an expanding palette of material possibilities. Natalie Hope McDonald talks to the Philadelphia artist about the evolution of her dynamic collection.



030

Personal Paths

On their 6-acre farm in southern Indiana, Rowland and Chinami Ricketts are cultural stewards, cultivating indigo for their textiles and fiber art. Diane Daniel has the story.

034

Collective Unconscious

What inspiration is more abundant than the world outside our front doors? Dakota Sexton spots seven artists whose eclectic work calls on flora, fauna, and more.

096

Master Class

Since he first set foot in a glass studio nearly 50 years ago, Mark Peiser has been a relentless experimenter and innovator – inspired by nothing less than the infinite sky. Jessica Shaykett connects with the tireless artist.

098

Wide World of Craft

Craft has always played a significant role in Israeli culture, and cosmopolitan Tel Aviv is no exception: The city boasts a thriving community of contemporary makers and designers. Davira S. Taragin and Aviva Ben-Sira take us on a tour.

104

Ideas

A shift is under way, says William Warmus. Once recognizable as a winner-take-all hierarchy, the art world is becoming more like a web – an interconnected ecosystem. And that has real implications for how we make and talk about art.

108

One Piece

Christopher Marley's Limited Aesthetica.

On the cover

Mariko Kusumoto's sculptures have changed dramatically, from hard-edged and intricate to soft and ethereal.

Photo: Cary Wolinsky, Babs Wolinsky, and Rick Kyle

page 044

Rowland Ricketts
Sazanami Runner,
2012, indigo, hemp
kibira, 60 x 11 in.
page 030

036
CRAFTED LIVES
Mixed Media

Brigitte Bouquet has a knack for mixing it up. In her sculptures, the Dutch-born artist combines natural objects with her intricate textiles and ceramics; at home, her style is an equally effortless blend of modern and antique, found and handcrafted. Liz Logan meets Bouquet at her Brooklyn townhouse.

044
Objects of Wonder

Be it the wondrous metal sculpture she is known for or the enchanting fiber work she has pursued of late, Mariko Kusumoto's creations prompt curiosity and transmit delight. Joyce Lovelace catches up with the Boston-area artist.

052
Root and Branch

With her sculptural sweetgrass baskets, Mary Jackson has preserved tradition and propelled it as an art form. But the celebrated artist's contributions to the field don't stop there. Joyce Lovelace talks to the South Carolina artist about her career.

060
It's About Time

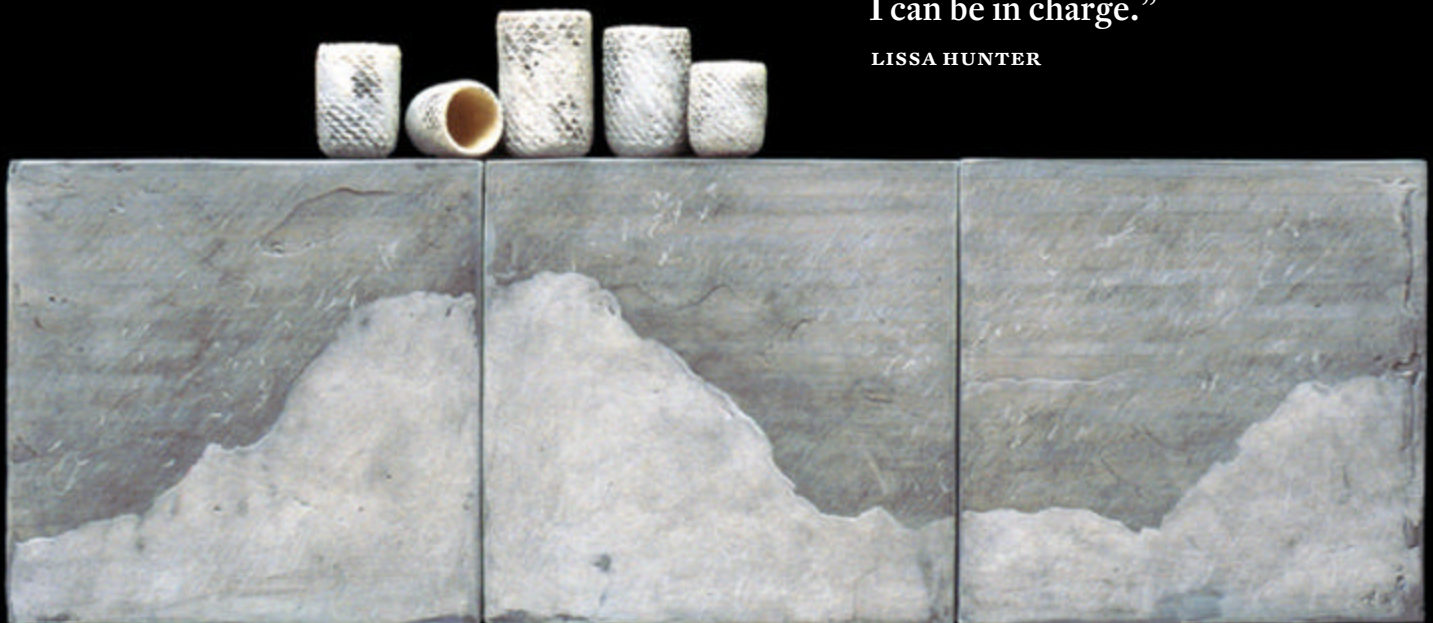
On the surface, Steven Siegel's monumental sculptures lean toward the tradition of land art, and his reclaimed materials nudge him toward the upcyclers' camp. But for the artist, time – past, present, and future – is the current driving it all. Brian K. Mahoney has the story in upstate New York.

068
Creative Continuum

Lissa Hunter is known for her accomplished basketry, but when the artist found herself yearning for a change, her work in clay proved just as compelling. Diane Daniel visits the studio of the multitalented artist in Portland, Maine.

“What I’m most interested in are ways of drawing on the surface. In that way, I can be in charge.”

LISSA HUNTER



Lissa Hunter
Forgetting, 2004,
paper cord, waxed
linen thread, paper,
paint, drywall, MDF,
charcoal, graphite,
16 x 36 x 3 in.
page 068



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The Nature of Risk

YOU COULD ARGUE THAT THERE are two kinds of artists: those who like planning and those who like spontaneity. I know which camp I fall into – I’m a planner. If I want to make a painting or a piece of jewelry, as I do sometimes, I get to work making sketches and checklists. I figure out the steps I’m going to take and the order in which I’ll take them. I don’t leave much to chance.

Other artists, I’ve discovered, approach artmaking very differently. I remember a painting teacher I had once describing her process as an “ongoing dialogue with the paint.” I wasn’t sure I wanted to give the paint a chance to speak.

I thought about this as we prepared this issue focused on the outdoors. If any artwork takes planning, it’s sculpture made to withstand the elements. Sculptors who make work for the outdoors have to figure nature – wild, unpredictable

nature – into their designs. As a result, says David R. Collens, director of one of the world’s premier sculpture parks, “outdoor sculpture is significantly more difficult, challenging, and expensive” than other sculpture (page 25). Maintenance and conservation are critical and ongoing needs.

Yet some artists who make work for the outdoors relish letting nature take its course. Take Steven Siegel (page 60). In one sense, he’s a planner. For his recent *Hill and Valley* installation, he had to design the structure and calculate the number of lodgepoles pines he needed (28), along with the amount of paper (30,000 pounds) and 5-inch nails (400 pounds) – all before he and a squadron of volunteers started on the execution in a Montana sculpture park.

But Siegel also works in the realm of the spontaneous, because his work is intended

to evolve with the effects of sun, wind, and precipitation. He repurposes man-made materials – newspapers, tires, crushed plastic, aluminum cans – to make massive sculptures that are designed to weather and settle and take on flora and fungi over time. “Decomposition is built into their DNA,” says writer Brian K. Mahoney of Siegel’s installations.

Nature, Siegel has learned in the 25 years he’s been making his sculptures, is a capricious collaborator, a risky medium. One 2002 work, *Scale*, made of 20,000 pounds of newspaper, was expected to withstand weather conditions in eastern Pennsylvania for 15 years. But just four years in, it started to collapse. Another rough winter, and there was little left.

Still, the risks Siegel takes are not so different from those taken by serious planners – those of us who’d never welcome the havoc that nature

Steven Siegel’s *To See Jennie Smile* (2006) at the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh. Siegel allows his sculptures to degrade in the outdoors.



wreaks. The difference is in what we planners tell ourselves, as we sketch and calculate and design: that we’ve got it all under control. We don’t.

In my checkered art career, I’ve had many disappointments, which for me were on the scale of *Scale*. I slaved over a brooch once that fell apart two weeks later. I’ve had pots blow up in the kiln. Recently I started over five times on a painting before deciding my idea was just not going to work.

What artists such as Siegel seem to know is that art is risk, whether you wing it or plan it out to the last tiny detail. We can deny that or embrace it. But it’s not going away.

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american craft

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LEGAL

American Craft®
(ISSN-0194-8008)
is published bimonthly by
the American Craft Council
1224 Marshall Street NE, Suite 200
Minneapolis, MN 55413
www.craftcouncil.org

Periodicals postage paid at
Minneapolis, MN, and additional
mailing offices. Copyright © 2015
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Basic membership rate is \$40
per year, including subscription
to *American Craft* (formerly *Craft*
Horizons). Add \$15 for Canadian
and foreign orders. Address all
subscription correspondence to:

American Craft Council
P.O. Box 3000
Denville, NJ 07834-3000
Phone (888) 313-5527

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authors and not necessarily those
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Address unsolicited material to:

American Craft, Editor in Chief
1224 Marshall Street NE, Suite 200
Minneapolis, MN 55413

Material will be handled with
care, but the magazine assumes
no responsibility for it. *American*
Craft is indexed in the Art Index,
Design and Applied Arts Index,
and Readers' Guide to Periodical
Literature. Book reviews are also
indexed in Book Review Index.

Newsstand distribution:
COMAG Marketing Group
155 Village Blvd.
Princeton Junction, NJ 08540

POSTMASTER:
Address changes to:
American Craft, P.O. Box 3000,
Denville, NJ 07834-3000

Printed in the U.S.A.

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To The Editor



The 'Pope of Pottery'

I, too, have been blessed by Warren MacKenzie's life of passionate generosity with his students ["The Disciples," Dec./Jan.]. The joy of making pots was passed to me by one of Warren's students, Mike Thiedeman, the ceramics instructor at Earlham College. So much laughing and honest critique and sincere encouragement to keep making pots; it was contagious. Mike said that he was not naturally good at making pots but that he really wanted to make pots. Passionate dedication to work – a legacy I aspire to carry on in my own life.

~Michael Hannah via the website

I was never Warren's student (wish I could have been), but I have visited him in his home in Stillwater while on trips to Minnesota. The first time I went there, I phoned him out of the blue, told him I was a potter and teacher from Georgia, and asked if I could stop by. He was making teapot spouts while we were in his studio, and he took the time to show us through the entire studio – the making room, glaze room, and kiln room. I sat at his treadle wheel. He told stories. It is remarkable that such a giant of American ceramics is so accommodating and happy to share his time with others who so admire his work and his values. I think of Warren MacKenzie as the "pope of pottery."

~Jeff Abney via the website



Before becoming a ceramist, Cliff Lee was a neurosurgeon simply looking to unwind.

Healing Art

I was excited to read the editor's note "Making It Better" [Feb./Mar.] on the power and benefits of making and the "function" of art and craft to heal the heart, mind, and soul. The review of the book *The Creativity Cure* and the interview with Alain de Botton ["Look Again"] made my heart beat faster, as they both talk about things I have known on a visceral level through my work


as a registered art therapist and studio artist. Cliff Lee's story ["The Call of the Wheel"] resonated with me, as I started out in college as a pre-veterinary medicine student who changed course after stumbling into a fiber arts studio. Art and craft can minister to the heart, soul, mind, and body of both the maker and the viewer. Thank you for putting this front and center and encouraging another

look at the meaning of function in relation to craft. My work's function is to uplift, inspire, soothe, or humor. This issue of *American Craft* did the same.

~Julie Branch via the website

More Objects of Admiration

Thomas Mann, Michael Boyd, Elizabeth Frank. The list goes on. [Voices, "Whom In Your Field Do You Admire?" Dec./Jan.]

~Sheryl Evans via 



Therman Statom uses art – and his talents as a teacher – to promote well-being in diverse communities.

The Self-Taught Artist

The interview with glass artist Paul Stankard [“Who Needs Education?” Dec./Jan.] is incredibly relevant to today’s growing mosaic community, which (like the hot glass movement of 40 years ago) does not yet have a place in the curriculum of art institutions in the US. And, like Mr. Stankard at the beginning of his career, mosaicists are driven by vision and fueled by experimentation and discovery. Mr. Stankard’s suggestions for a self-driven commitment to excellence are smart, doable, rigorous, and encouraging. What an amazing teacher he must be. Sincere thanks to both Mr. Stankard (whose work never fails to astonish and delight) and Ms. Moses.
~Nancie Mills Pipgras via the website

Thank you so much for posting this inspiring piece. I could highlight sentences in every paragraph.

~Fawn Butler via

Craft Builds Character

I couldn’t agree more [“Making as Morality,” Dec./Jan.].

~Jessica C. White via

An interesting look at the importance of craft in the American education system.

~Craft Alliance via

Thinking Outside the Studio

Thank you for this article [“Art Restoration,” Feb./Mar.], an introduction for me to Therman Statom. His artwork is so vibrant, an extension, it seems, of his own vivacity. I admire him for coming out of the studio and engaging children in art.

~Carol Casey via the website

Combat Paper Rocks

Stoked to see that @CombatPaper [“The Power of Paper,” Feb./Mar.] is in this issue of @AmericanCraft!

~Betsy Greer via

Coming Attractions

Love the ultra-cool @AmericanCraft magazine trailers. Can’t wait to read the February/March issue; it sounds amazing.

~Elena Rosenberg via

Keep in Touch

We’ll publish a cross section of your notes as space permits; they may be edited for length and clarity.



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▲ Check out our slideshow about making indigo dye.

Indigo à Gogo

If you like the story about fiber artists Rowland and Chinami Ricketts (page 30), head online for a bonus slideshow on the couple's work, including photos of them cultivating, harvesting, and processing indigo plants.

▼ Read how climate change is affecting basketmaking.



ACC Archives



Michael Mauney



◀ Watch our interview with ceramist Cliff Lee.

Live at NCECA

The 49th conference of the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts was held in late March in Providence, Rhode Island, and ACC's Perry A. Price and Jessica Shaykett were there, presenting *Stories Potters Tell: Clay and Community in the St. Croix Valley*. They discussed the founding of Minnesota's St. Croix Valley pottery tour (above), now in its 23rd year, and ACC's oral history project on the topic. Watch the video that accompanied their talk, and read about conference highlights online.

Endangered Species

In this issue, we profile sweetgrass basketmaker Mary Jackson (page 52), who has worked for years to restore the dwindling sweetgrass supply in coastal South Carolina. ACC director of education Perry A. Price delves more deeply into the issue in his conversations with basketmakers who have seen firsthand how climate change and industrial development have affected materials such as black ash, sweetgrass, and reed.

Showtime for Ceramics

Following "The Call of the Wheel," our February/March feature on ceramist Cliff Lee, we caught up with Lee in person at the Baltimore ACC show in late February. Head online or visit the ACC YouTube channel to watch the video. While you're there, you can also watch an interview with show artist and ceramist Ani Kasten.

Douglas Lee



The Right Stuff

We asked this issue's Voices contributors to tell us about their most unexpected materials (page 27). For more on unusual mediums, download your copy of *Material Crush*, our free digital bonus issue, to see what some 30 makers are using as the basis for their art.

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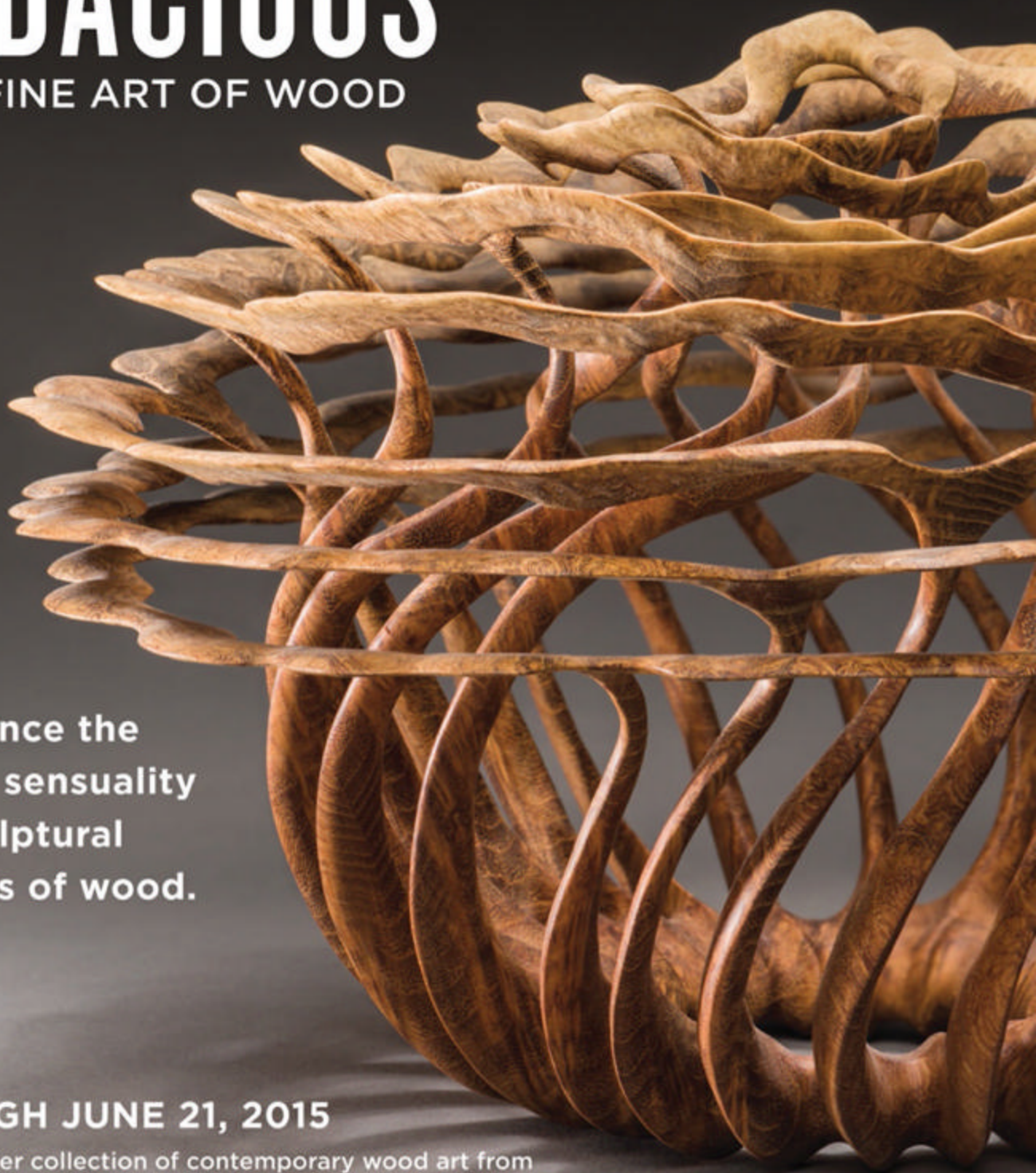
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Alain Mailland, *Grace (detail)*, 2000. Locust burl. The Montalto Bohlen Collection.
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ZOOM

A timely survey of shows, views, people, and work

On Our Radar Natural Translation

IF YOU HAPPENED TO CATCH the Textile Society of America's group show "New Directions" at the Craft and Folk Art Museum last fall, you were probably stopped in your tracks at the entrance by a stunning weaving by Brooklyn artist Whitney Artell. Called *Borderlands*, it's a large hanging that captures a moment of quiet outdoors, with light filtering through trees onto a leaf-strewn ground. That the scene is overlaid with silvery threads woven in the pattern of a chain-link fence – the very symbol of urban ugliness – doesn't diminish its loveliness at all. In fact, the combination seems natural, even sublime.

"I'm interested in our concept of what nature is," says Artell, 32. "Is nature this outside force, separate from us as humans? Are we not part of nature? It's weird to me, the whole nature-culture dichotomy that we have as Westerners."

In her art, Artell finds beauty in a postindustrial aesthetic, one that blends the romantic ideal of an unspoiled landscape with the everyday detritus of human activity and production. That fusion of raw and organic with built and structured is also embodied in her process, which usually starts with hand manipulation of found materials and finishes with the use of modern technological tools. She's even integrated her environmental interests and her personal

practice as a maker with her day job as a designer for True Textiles, a domestic mill committed to eco-friendly manufacturing.

"I'm fascinated by industry," Artell says. "I don't think we can really go back and get away from it. So it's important to find ways to work within that system." At True Textiles, her specialty is health care. "It's a lot of hospital curtains, which is actually related to what I'm interested in conceptually. I really enjoy creating imagery from nature that's soothing to the patient."

Her passions are the logical result, she says, of growing up in suburban New Jersey, with trains running past her yard and a creative mother who taught

her quilting and gardening. After earning her BFA in fiber at Maryland Institute College of Art in 2006, she did stints designing for Izod and Nautica, then went back to school, earning an MFA in textiles from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2012.

Borderlands was inspired by photos she took in Providence riding her bike along a wooded bay path, with a view of abandoned industrial buildings. She collaged those images with a mix of dirt, plastic bits, and gesso. "There has to be this other step of translating [images] into materials, to really push the concept." She then scanned the composition into a digital file, translated it to a weave structure,

Whitney Artell translated photography of carnivorous plants into the handwoven *Flourish* (2011).



and produced the piece on a computerized Jacquard loom. "Jacquard weaving is my main, favorite way of working, how I finally bring together all these disparate elements. It gives you a structure and limitations."

She'll use whatever technique suits her purpose, though. For a piece called *Third Nature*, she photographed moss growing on telephone poles, stapled the pictures to wood, scanned the image, digitally printed it on fabric, then ended up shredding and free-form embroidering the whole thing to suggest tattered flyers tacked to a post. *Toxic Sublime*, another digitally printed work, showcases the unexpectedly artful pattern of a piece of found pressboard. "I thought, 'This is beautiful, I have to make something about this.' Then I read about how it's actually made, how toxic it is. Well, that fit, too."

Artell's latest works in progress are based on a 2014 residency at Wave Hill, a 28-acre public garden in the Bronx. With access to a greenhouse and a studio overlooking the Hudson River, it was a tailor-made experience of nature in a big-city context. Meanwhile, her job with the mill has her always thinking about the artistic possibilities of the Jacquard loom. "I love what I do," she says. "I'm constantly learning more about weaving."

~JOYCE LOVELACE

whitneyartell.com



ABOVE:
Toxic Sublime (2012) is
inspired by the patterns
in pressboard, a source
of industrial pollution.

TOP:
Photographs of moss-
covered telephone poles
became digital fodder
for *Third Nature* (2012).

LEFT:
Nine feet high, *Border-
lands* (2012) sprang from
views of empty buildings,
where nature had begun
to reclaim the landscape.



Leather frame handles, dubbed Little Lifters, reduce strain by allowing riders to carry a bike much like a grocery bag or a briefcase.

zoom

Product Placement *Leather By Necessity*

GEOFFREY FRANKLIN ALWAYS had an interest in making things. But the Walnut Studiolo founder began designing products for a living only when he couldn't find the right accessories for his daily bike commute in Portland. Without any formal leatherwork training, the eighth-generation Oregonian designed and handcrafted what would be the first of many products now available from his workshop – a leather U-lock holster that could permanently live on his bicycle.

His material choice was no accident. "I strategically chose leather because of its combination of strength, durability, and flexibility, its ancient roots in human history, and its historic presence on the bicycle," says Franklin. He also has a personal connection to cowhide. "I was familiar with leather horse tack



ABOVE: This frame-mounted U-lock holster cradles a bike lock to prevent rattling.



LEFT: Modeled after a Saint Bernard's brandy barrel, the Barrel bag carries spare tubes and tools in style.

from my time spent on our family farm, so it was a comfortable material to me."

A graduate of the University of Oregon architecture school, Franklin runs Walnut Studiolo with his wife, Valerie; he designs and crafts the products in the workshop while she runs the business. The studio opened in 2009, the same year Franklin founded Walnut, an architecture and design firm, with partner Douglas Ouder Kirk. "The study of architecture will forever influence the way I see the world," Franklin says, "but architecture as a means of income is a diminishing part of my life."

To represent the small size of their studio, the couple call their leather workshop a "studiolo" – an architecture term for a small, private study room. Franklin says he can spend as little as a day or as much as three years to come up with a concept. "My first images for any new project always come from a pencil on paper. I use big brown sheets of butcher paper and spread my ideas out." While he also likes to use digital modeling, it is usually one of the last steps in the process.



The workshop currently produces 200 to 300 pieces a month with the help of three part-time employees. The typical customer for bicycle accessories is an urban commuter – mainly younger professionals. It may be no surprise, then, that the most popular products include a six-pack frame cinch (a way to carry beverages on your bike) and a bicycle frame handle to help lift and carry your ride. The workshop has added non-bike-related products to its repertoire, including a blueprint tube, a travel cribbage board made of laser-engraved birch plywood, and a new collection of leather drawer pulls and cabinet handles. Sourcing quality materials is a point of pride for the company. “We only use USDA



The Cribbelt doubles as a cribbage board, designed by Walnut Studiolo owner (and cribbage enthusiast) Geoffrey Franklin.

TOP: Photographer Jim Golden captured the complete 2012 Walnut Studiolo line in a single image.

RIGHT: Leather home goods include these cabinet handles (top) and drawer pulls.



beef cattle hides vegetable-tanned in the United States,” says Franklin.

The designer continues to find inspiration in the material he first encountered on the family farm. “The vegetable-tanned leather we use can be molded like clay or hardened into armor,” he says. “There is a bit of magic in that. And here is the secret – we are still finding new ways to use it.”

~RITA CATINELLA ORRELL

walnutstudiolo.com

Rita Catinella Orrell is a design journalist in New Jersey. Follow her on Twitter and Instagram at @designythings.

The Short List The Long View



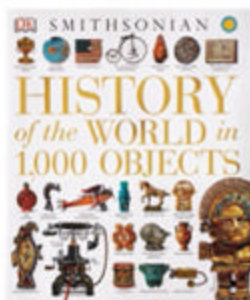
The Manly Art of Knitting
By Dave Fougner
Ginkgo Press, \$14

THE COVER IMAGE SAYS IT all: Comfortably seated on his horse, with a cowboy hat shading his eyes, author Dave Fougner is absorbed in his knitting (although his horse is paying attention to the photographer). Originally published in 1972, *The Manly Art*

of Knitting is a timely re-release; recent museum exhibitions have celebrated makers who are challenging traditional gender divisions in craft. But this cult classic also stands the test of time: Photographs of manly hands, enhanced with neatly drawn diagrams, clearly illustrate techniques, while specific stitches, often relegated to “the seemingly foreign language” of project instructions, are

described without abbreviations and feature high-contrast close-up photography.

No review of this book can be complete, however, without admiring the projects, from dog bed to hammock to horse blanket. The hammock is knitted on shovel handles or pool cues. As for the horse blanket: “If you don’t have a horse, this project will make a good throw rug.” ~**DULCEY HELLER**



History of the World in 1,000 Objects
By the Smithsonian
DK Publishing, \$50

IT’S KNOWN AS “AMERICA’S attic,” but in *History of the World in 1,000 Objects*, the Smithsonian sets its sights on all of humankind – using the things we made as evidence of who we were

and what we did. In this tome of human history, objects from museum collections around the world are organized in rough chronological order, providing a conventional look at our past, from ancient societies to recent technological advancements. The objects include the mundane and sublime, from

plumbing pipe to Michelangelo’s *Pietà*, and are arrayed handsomely by culture, time, and topic. But don’t presume exhaustive explanation of individual items or nuanced interpretation of historical events; with millennia to cover, brevity is only to be expected.

~**PERRY A. PRICE**



Bauhaus Weaving Theory: From Feminine Craft to Mode of Design
By T’ai Smith
University of Minnesota Press, \$90

INTELLECTUAL RIGOR OFTEN goes hand in hand with the Bauhaus, a school as famous for its approach to design as it is for the range of arts and crafts talent it influenced. Yet analysis

of Bauhaus theoretical writings has largely ignored the texts that emerged from the female-demarked weaving workshop.

No more. Ninety years after Anni Albers wrote her first analytical essay “Bauhaus Weaving,” T’ai Smith’s *Bauhaus Weaving Theory* demonstrates how the school’s weavers grappled with gender, material, and modernity, and how the fields

of photography, painting, and architecture informed their artistic practice. An assistant professor at the University of British Columbia, Smith makes a compelling case, drawing on historical context and insightful excerpts from the artists’ texts. The result is an edifying and overdue investigation of the weavers’ far-reaching contributions. ~**JESSICA SHAYKETT**

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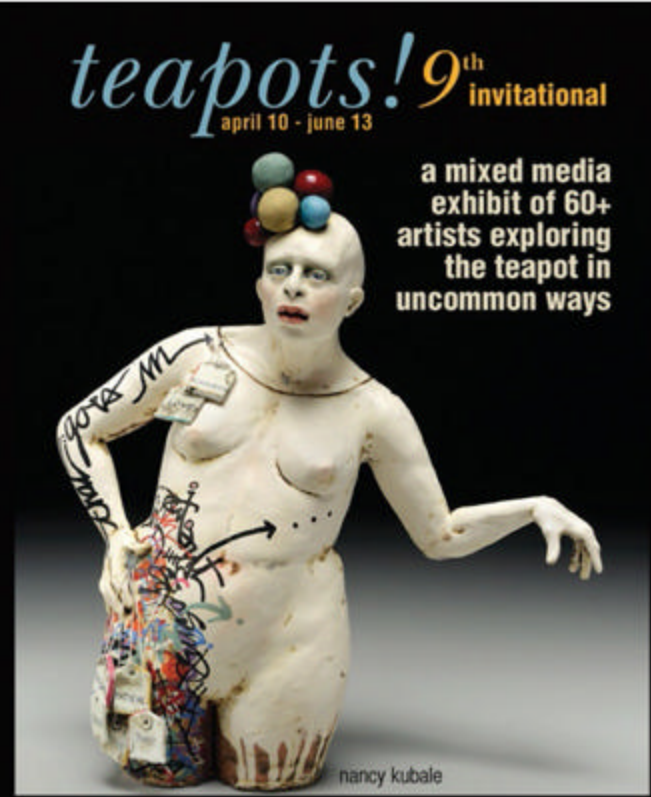
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Savannah College of Art and Design students at an American Craft Council Making Meaning in the Marketplace symposium; photo: Timothy Hutto

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AMERICAN CRAFT COUNCIL

Goods Bring the Outside In



Alyson Iwamoto



Oru Kayak (2)

▲ Oru Kayak

It's not easy to store a kayak if you live in a tiny apartment. That's why Oru Kayak, a San Francisco startup, developed an origami-inspired take on the age-old boat. (Oru means "fold" in Japanese.) Each kayak is made from a single sheet of recyclable plastic and folds down to the size of a large portfolio. orukayak.com



Kat Teutsch

◀ Alyson Iwamoto Ceramics

For her Wabi Sabi collection of ceramic jewelry, Los Angeles jewelry artist Alyson Iwamoto drew on a wealth of influences, from her Japanese heritage to the wonders of natural phenomena, in this case the tidal pull of the sun and the moon.

alysoniwamoto.com



Suzie Sorenson

▼ Noble Goods

At their Brooklyn workshop, Molly FitzSimons and Christopher Moore produce home furnishings and accessories that could easily be described as organic. Their Honeycomb tray is made using solid American

hardwoods, such as maple, shown here, and features an inlaid honeycomb pattern coated in bio-derived, environmentally friendly resin. noblegoods.com



◀ Tom Raffield

To produce elegant pieces of furniture and lighting such as this Butterfly pendant, Tom Raffield doesn't rely on complex machinery. Instead the craftsman and his team, working in Cornwall, England, focus on steam bending, a low-impact method of producing home furnishings that is just one of many of the workshop's efforts to promote sustainability. tomraffield.com

Sideways Cornwall



Sharon Mallett

◀ Son of Søren

If you have a hankering for handmade clothing and accessories with a hint of Scandinavian style, you'll find it easy to love Son of Søren. Run by Suzie Sorenson out of her 100-year-old home in Minneapolis, the line pays homage to Sorenson's Nordic ancestry as well as the history of menswear. sonofsoren.com

▲ Haand

Childhood friends Chris Pence and Mark Warren like to describe the aesthetic of their ceramics business as "farmhouse futuristic." It's a style shaped by the natural world around their rural North Carolina studio, as seen in this Cloudware vase. haand.us

Shows to See

View the complete shows and events calendar at craftcouncil.org/event-calendar.

CA / Palm Springs
Palm Springs Art Museum

Ai Weiwei's Circle of Animals/ Zodiac Heads: Gold

to May 31
psmuseum.org

Chinese artist and activist Ai Weiwei's 12 animal heads of gilded bronze are based on a set that was part of an Italian-made 18th-century clock and fountain in Beijing; it was destroyed by British and French troops in 1860. In re-creating a work of traditional Chinese imagery that was made and unmade by Europeans, Ai has formed a hybrid of past and present, East and West, destruction and renewal, others' ideas and his own.



CA / Sacramento
Crocker Art Museum
**Of Cottages and Castles:
The Art of California Faience**
to May 17

crockerartmuseum.org
The terraces, stairways, ceilings, floors, and walls lavishly adorned in decorative tile at Hearst Castle are California Faience pottery studio's most spectacular legacy. But before the company – started by two classmates from Alfred University back East – tackled that project for William Randolph Hearst in the 1920s, the company had been making a name for itself with vases, sculptures, and (of course) tile. This is the first exhibition to focus on all of the company's work, with examples of the Hearst tiles as well as decorative creations in art deco, arts and crafts, and moderne styles.

FL / St. Petersburg
Florida Craft Art Exhibition Gallery
Garden of Earthly Pleasures
to Apr. 18

floridacraftart.org
Artists in a botanically abundant state, where gardeners can dig and plant year-round, interpret the title of this juried show in a wide range of craft mediums.



Elmhurst Art Museum



IL / Elmhurst
Elmhurst Art Museum
**On the Brink: New Work
by Nnenna Okore**

to May 3
elmhurstartmuseum.org
Nnenna Okore's large sculptures and installations have roots in both the Chicago cityscape where she now lives and the small Nigerian town where she grew up. Her materials are space, light, and shadow as much as burlap, newspapers, twine, and plastic bags; weaving them all together, she creates new beauty from the discarded and the decaying.

↑
Nnenna Okore
at Elmhurst
Art Museum

↑
California
Faience at
Crocker Art
Museum

MI / Bloomfield Hills
Cranbrook Art Museum
**Bent, Cast, and Forged:
The Jewelry of Harry Bertoia**

to Nov. 29
cranbrookart.edu/museum
Harry Bertoia's furniture and sculptures are modernist icons, but it all started with jewelry: The experiments in form and fabrication that he made in his jewelry resounded throughout his later work.



←
Harry Bertoia
at Cranbrook
Art Museum



↑
Leah
Shenandoah
at Iroquois
Indian
Museum

Courtesy of the collection of Kirby and Iran Brown (2)

↑
Tattoo by
Filip Leu
at the Mint
Museum





AKC Museum of the Dog



MO / St. Louis
AKC Museum of the Dog
Dogs in Porcelain Sculpture
museumofthedog.org

The recent gift of 125 porcelain dogs from the estate of collector Glen Twiford is the heart of this ongoing and delightful display of 19th- and 20th-century canines from the kilns of Royal Doulton, Meissen, Royal Copenhagen, Rosenthal, Nymphenburg, and Hutschenreuther. This new pack joins the museum's 700-plus sculptures, paintings, prints, and decorative objects, all devoted to humankind's four-legged, wet-nosed BFF.

MO / St. Louis
Craft Alliance,
Delmar Loop Gallery
Small Buildings:
Built, Unbuilt, Unbuildable

to May 10
craftalliance.org
 Some of the sculptures, maquettes, drawings, and other pieces in this show are architects' or installation artists' actual models. Others riff on architectural models, but refer to no future full-size project. All are finely crafted works that invert the usual size relationship between people and the structures that surround them, turning viewers into giants.

NE / Omaha
Kaneko
Fiber

to Apr. 25
thekaneko.org
 The organization founded by ACC Fellow Jun Kaneko and his wife, Ree, hosts a fiber extravaganza with six

Werner
 Pfeiffer
 at Toledo
 Museum
 of Art ➔

Jon Eric Riis
 at Kaneko

Courtesy of the artist

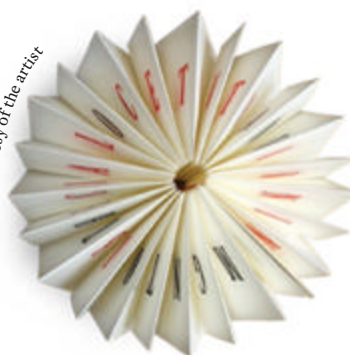


exhibitions: "Fiber Legends," works by Nick Cave, Sheila Hicks, and Jon Eric Riis; "Global Threads," with work by international artists Yoshiko Wada, Jessica Hemmings, Mary Zicafoose, and Susan Knight; the American Tapestry Biennial; "Fabric of Survival," a Holocaust survivor's story told in 36 fabric pictures; "Florabunda," a look at fabric design in the golden age of the Hawaiian shirt; and "The Quilted Conscience Project," which aims to build bridges between immigrant or refugee children and established communities in the US.

NY / Howes Cave
Iroquois Indian Museum
Buckskin to Bikinis:
Haudenosaunee Wearable Art
 Apr. 2 – Nov. 30
iroquoismuseum.org

This show brings together work of about 30 Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) designers who create innovative apparel that honors traditions without being limited by them. Fringe, leather, beads, and feathers are reconsidered and reclaimed to become elements of couture fashion, streetwear, accessories, and other wearables that express themes of cultural change and appropriation, and personal and political identity.

Courtesy of the artist



NC / Charlotte
Mint Museum Uptown
Body Embellishment

Apr. 11 – Sep. 6
mintmuseum.org
 The Mint has gathered some 100 examples of the ways people are adorning, augmenting, and altering themselves in the 21st century: experimental fashion, extravagant tattoos, innovative jewelry, and sculptural nail art, all of which just might evoke equal amounts of: Why? And how? And wow!

NY / Corning
GlassFest
 May 21 – 24
glassfest.org
 Corning, the Crystal City, raises a glass to its history as a center of innovation (made there: the first Edison lightbulb, mirrors for the Hubble space telescope, Pyrex cookware, lots of glass art) with a week-end of exhibitions, demos, food, music, and fireworks.

OH / Toledo
Toledo Museum of Art
Drawn, Cut & Layered:
The Art of Werner Pfeiffer
 to May 3

toledomuseum.org
 Paper pops way beyond its usual two dimensions in this show of nearly 200 of Werner Pfeiffer's artist books, sculptures, dimensional prints, and collages. Some have moving parts; all reflect the artist's love of puzzles, wordplay, and machines. This is the first major exhibition devoted to Pfeiffer's artist books and works in paper, drawn from his half-century-long career.

Shop Talk Something Fierce



WHILE HIKING THE INCA TRAIL on vacation in late 2013, Erin Przekop and Tom Critchlow had an epiphany. Eager to start a creative business of their own, the Brooklyn couple realized they could combine their respective backgrounds in design and technology to curate and sell the work of artists online.

They knew many artists in their neighborhood of Boerum Hill. Przekop had been working in fashion design for 13 years – at DVF, Céline, and Rick Owens – and Critchlow, a self-taught internet geek and native of Yorkshire, England, was working in marketing at Google. In March 2014 they founded Fiercely Curious, an online shop focused on fine art made in Brooklyn, and six months later they started **Fiercely Made**, a sister site that sells handcrafted goods from Brooklyn makers. Fiercely Made (fiercelymade.com) now includes more than 20 artisans.

What makes Fiercely Made different from other high-end craft shops and galleries in Brooklyn?

Critchlow: We have a lot of friends who are artists,

designers, and makers, and we know that they don't have a ton of time to market themselves. If they're engaged with a traditional gallery, the gallery takes a large commission. Our model is that we sell artists' and makers' work online, do all the marketing and put on pop-up shops in Brooklyn, with plans for some in Manhattan this year. We take a lower percentage than a gallery, and we are non-exclusive, so the artists can sell their work elsewhere or sell directly to consumers. We give artists more options.

Przekop: Having a store online also allows us to be scrappy and offer dynamic, site-specific work in our pop-up shops.

What can people expect to find in your pop-up shops?

Critchlow: For our launch, we rented a 3,500-square-foot theatrical space in Gowanus, Brooklyn, and about a thousand people came in over a week.

Przekop: We had longboard skateboards by Daniel Moyer of FunkinFunction hung from the ceiling in a Calderesque mobile; he was inspired by the space, and below the mobile was a mulberry dining table that he made.

LEFT: Fiercely Made founders Erin Przekop and Tom Critchlow at home in Brooklyn.

RIGHT: Handmade cheese knives by Chelsea Miller.

BELOW: The first pop-up shop at a Brooklyn warehouse.



Critchlow: We had handcrafted bikes and a bed with a wood frame, which got a lot of attention. Customers got to see how the pieces were made through live demos. Ceramist Signe Yberg was throwing pottery while musician Brandon Lopez played upright bass.

Who are some of the makers on the site, and what makes their work exciting?

Przekop: We started with our friends, and then we branched out. Thomas Callahan of Horse Cycles makes beautiful bikes and also carbon steel camping knives. He collaborates with a master leathersmith, Will Lisak of ETWAS, for the sheaths. We want to foster collaborations like that one.

Critchlow: Colleen & Eric are a husband-and-wife team with a fun, playful style. They make the Opposite Day lamp table; you twist the lamp to turn on the table, which is an LED light.

Przekop: Chelsea Miller, who makes kitchen knives with

gorgeous wood handles – using spalted maple, for instance – introduced us to Robert Sukrachand, who does minimalist furniture with whitewashing and reclaimed materials. His elm coffee table has been popular; every one is custom-made.

How would you describe your aesthetic and your mission?

Critchlow: We try to find independent makers who have a unique style and great attention to detail, are focused on their craft, and care deeply about what they're making. We also choose makers who source their materials ethically.

Przekop: We visit all our makers' studios, take photos, and do a Q&A. Our goal is to explore how and why the makers create their work – their materials, their processes. I always leave inspired.

~LIZ LOGAN

Liz Logan is a Brooklyn freelance writer whose work has appeared in ARTNews and other magazines.

Inside Track Free-Range Art

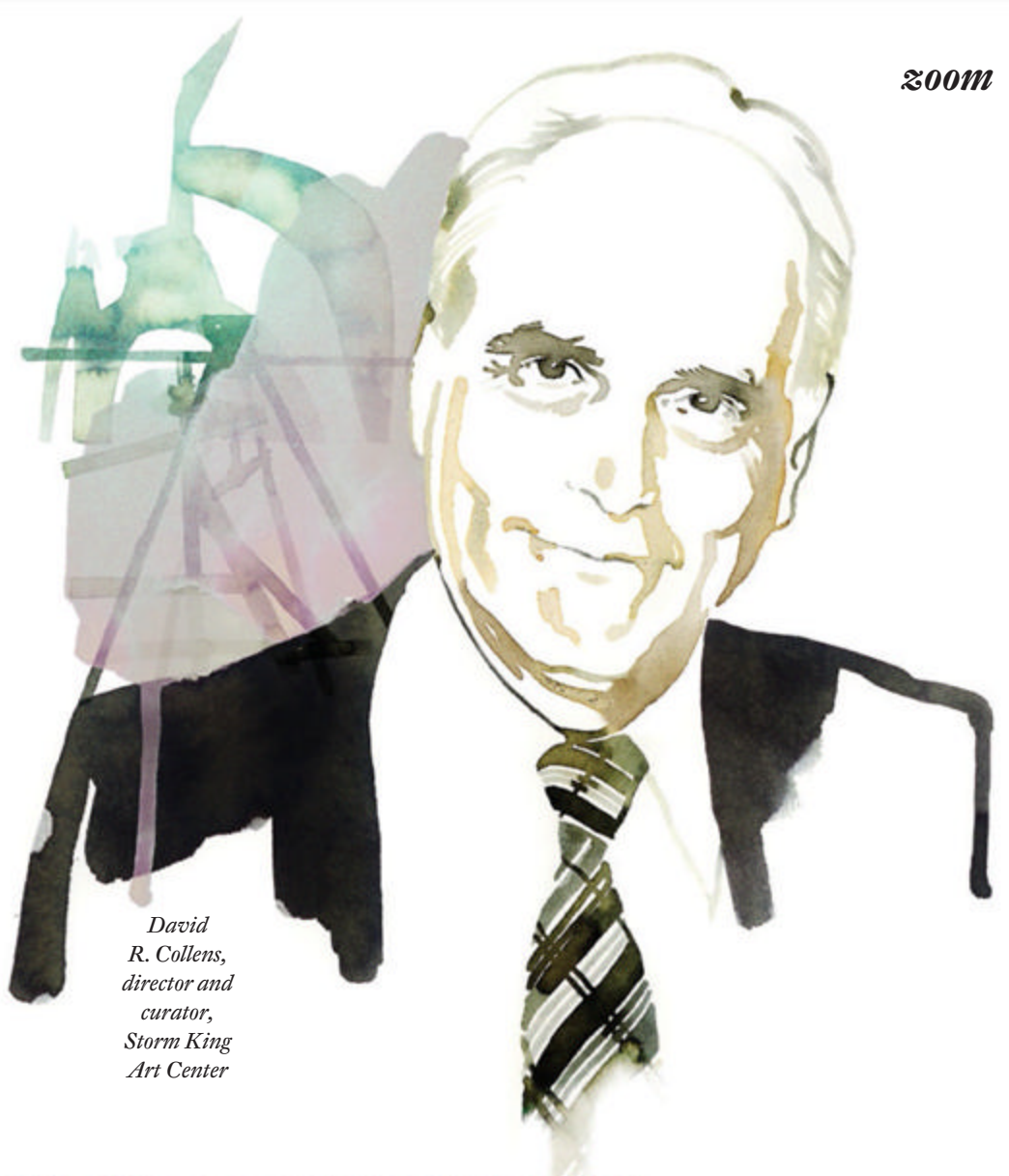
STORM KING ART CENTER IS a museum and sculpture park in the Hudson Valley, about an hour north of New York City. Founded in 1960, Storm King encompasses 500 acres with more than 100 post-World War II sculptures, including work by David Smith, Alexander Calder, Louise Nevelson, Richard Serra, Louise Bourgeois, Donald Judd, and Claes Oldenburg. We spoke with David R. Collens, director and curator since 1976, about what makes Storm King special.

You must know the terrain exceptionally well, given your long tenure at Storm King. Do you have favorite spots within the property?

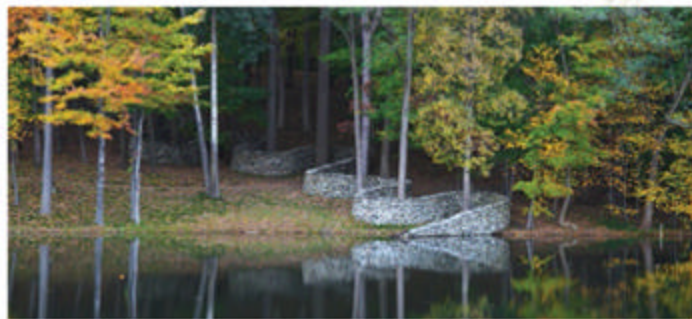
There are many wonderful locations. Storm King is a variety of different landscapes: open fields with native grasses, wooded areas where people can walk on trails, and the more formal area around the museum, which is a 1935 Normandy-style building with a slate roof.

How do you decide where to site a given work, whether you are borrowing or acquiring?

For me the process involves walking around the property all year long, thinking about potential sculpture locations. Where possible I work with the artists or artists' representatives; their views are always taken into account. We consider the scale of a sculpture, the overall size, how it appears from different angles, and how it fits into a particular space.



David
R. Collens,
director and
curator,
Storm King
Art Center



ABOVE:
Sculptor Andy Goldsworthy and his team built this winding structure, colloquially known as the "Storm King wall," from stones on the property.

RIGHT:
Alexander Liberman's 36-foot-high *Iliad*, one of numerous sculptures that dwarf viewers.



I think it's important with large-scale sculpture for people to be able to circulate around and, if appropriate, through a piece. Each sculpture has its own place; we're not crowded with sculpture.

Wildlife is abundant on the property. Are animals drawn to particular sculptures?

I would say that birds such as hawks and eagles like to perch on the taller sculptures – works by Calder and Mark di Suvero, Tal Streeter's *Endless Column*, Menashe Kadishman's *Suspended*; these are 30 feet high or more. The birds like to be able to keep an eye on the ground level, with mice and other animals running around that they might be after.



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Alyson Sholtz's *Mirror Fence*, a visitor favorite, reflects seasonal change at Storm King.



Deer, Canada geese, and wild turkeys are attracted to certain sculptures because of their reflective surfaces. We have fox, too; it's quite a diverse range. Occasionally a bear comes through. Not frequently, but it does happen.

About a dozen sculptures have been commissioned for the center over the years. Tell us about a recent one.

A new acquisition by Alyson Sholtz called *Mirror Fence* is absolutely spectacular. We just completed the process of acquiring it and putting it into a permanent material. When it came to Storm King as a loan, it was wood and reflective plexiglass, 140 feet long – a picket fence, 36 inches high. People loved it from the beginning, and we were fortunate to be able to raise the money to put it into industrial glass. We had been thinking of stainless steel, but we couldn't get the right polish with stainless steel. People love to sit or lie on the ground and take photographs of it because it reflects the mountains, the sky, the leaves on the trees, the people sitting there.

Are artists who make work for the outdoors different from other artists?

Usually artists are developing their careers and then become challenged to think about the outdoors. I don't think it happens right away, because outdoor sculpture is significantly more difficult, challenging, and expensive; it must hold up well in different weather conditions. Whether or not they use

a fabrication shop, these artists are doing work that is very high-tech. At Storm King we have a climate that is very difficult. We often have plenty of snow and ice and long winters, and summers can be very hot. Sculptures have to stay up all year long; they need maintenance and conservation work on a regular basis. It's not a forgiving landscape.

Are there artists who welcome the effects of weather?

Andy Goldsworthy, maker of the Storm King wall, likes the process of weathering. The wall's stones are from the property. He's an artist who wants to let things happen the way nature wants it to go.

Tell us about the annual summer solstice celebration.

It's been magical. We've got the mountains, the tall grasses blowing around, and 200 people. We always hold the event with a full moon coming out. We do a tour around on a tram to see the property in moonlight.

Some 80,000 people visit each year. What draws them?

A lot of people come up because we're 50 miles north of New York, the Hudson Valley is beautiful, the landscape is very special, and the sculpture collection is extraordinary. You don't have to be an expert on sculpture to enjoy Storm King.

How do you feel about this being your life's work?

It takes my breath away to this day. ~MONICA MOSES

stormking.org

Bottle Bowl by Amber Cowan

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Voices

What are the most unexpected materials you've used in your work?



WHAT YOU FIND IN the Richmond city limits is somewhat unexpected. Some of the relics that I've come across resonate with the peri-urban narratives of indigenous creatures that I never saw in other cities. These relics-turned-art materials include skeletal fragments of animals, dehydrated remains of a bat, and remnants reflecting the defeated flights of baby birds. These remains found on train tracks and sidewalks reflect failures and battles quietly occurring around us every day.

~**SAYAKA SUZUKI**,
glass artist,
Richmond, VA



MY MATERIALS usually creep into my repertoire after many visits to the silly and inspiring trim shops off Seventh Avenue in New York. Hunting, gathering, and migrating to my sources and the use of industrial man-made materials is where I find inspiration. Vinyl-coated recycled polyester, industrial-dyed chicken feathers, plastic palettes, fique, retro-reflective tape, and phosphorescent and holographic tape are woven, collaged, and manipulated into a kind of disco environment in my textiles.

~**MICHAEL RADYK**,
textile artist,
Kutztown, PA



WHEN I WAS IN college I had my dad (who lives in northern Wisconsin) place an ad in the local newspaper asking for unwanted taxidermy of any kind. It yielded the best results: I got an antelope, a coyote pelt, an armadillo, a duck, a pheasant, and a fish. It was so surprising to see the items people didn't want anymore, and it really allowed me to be creative in new ways. Since I decorate the taxidermy with sequins, paint, etc., I was really excited by the different shapes of the animals.

~**CASSANDRA SMITH**,
sculptor,
Milwaukee



THE ONE SCENARIO that sticks out is my search for vintage linoleum. For the 1930s hairstyle in my piece *A Century of Hair, 1900-1990*, I desperately wanted to use real 1930s-era linoleum. After exhausting all resources, I put the word out that I was looking for old linoleum. A call from a friend led me to finally unearth exactly what I wanted, under 10 layers of flooring in an old building. It was a victorious moment!

~**ANNE LEMANSKI**,
visual artist,
Spruce Pine, NC



I CREATE JEWELRY from objects I save from an untimely demise in landfills. Recently I discovered a paper company (the Lost Coast Culture Machine) that makes paper from unwanted thrift store clothes, and my mind filled with design ideas. Together we produced a strong, durable paper to create jewelry with. It was a fun experience, and I learned some astonishing facts about the fashion industry and how textiles are one of the largest producers of CO₂ emissions.

~**LEXI DALY**,
jewelry artist,
Sebastopol, CA



Cassandra Smith
Fish, 2008, plastic fish, sequins, paint, 4.5 ft. dia.

Shape Shifter

STORY BY *Natalie Hope McDonald*

AT HER STUDIO IN SOUTH PHILADELPHIA, surrounded by pizza parlors, cafés, and grandmothers who still sweep the front stoop, Maria Eife is busy sketching ideas for a new jewelry collection. Inspired by ornate styles from a gamut of eras – ancient times, the Victorian era, the swinging '60s – Eife's bold, geometric designs stand out not only for their shapes and

materials, but also as another instance of designers using 3D-printing technology.

For the past few years, the South Jersey-born designer has been using the power of 3D printing to create some of her most striking work, including new Pleated earrings and Cage rings. "When I first started participating in the high-end fine craft shows in 2011, I was not

sure how people would receive it," admits the 37-year-old, an invited artist at past American Craft Council and Martha Stewart Holiday Craft shows. "But my experience was nothing but positive. Most people were very excited, intrigued, and sometimes confused. I would hear over and over again that this was the first 3D-printed object they had ever seen in person."

Ever since the technology went mainstream, it began offering Eife a variety of new materials, such as bronze-infused steel, to play with at 3D printers throughout the city. "Right now the most common materials are plastics," she says, which have lent themselves to a few of her recent designs, including the Cage and Linked Loops bangles. "The most exciting material I recently

heard about is direct gold printing," she says, which harks back to her early days at the Tyler School of Art, where both traditional jewelry making and digital techniques are taught.

"I was drawn to study jewelry, specifically contemporary art jewelry, because of the combination of skill and art and concept that can be present," Eife says. "I liked the challenge



Maria Eife's laser-sintered nylon jewelry, such as the **Cage bangle** (2013), is bright white when printed. She dyes the porous material various colors.



Eife used CAD for her **Star Cage rings** (2014). They were 3D-printed in wax, then cast in silver and gold using traditional lost-wax techniques.



of learning the skills alongside the cultivation of ideas.”

Since then, Eife has taken a few unexpected creative turns that led her into the 3D world. She adopted laser-cutting early on. Her Binary necklaces, the first collection she presented, are cut in industrial wool felt and remain among the most popular in her increasingly sophisticated collection.

Almost all of Eife’s jewelry, which honors the geometric legacies of greats such as Alexander Calder, Issey Miyake, and industrial designer Gijs Bakker, is created using some sort of digital design or fabrication. “The design and production process work together to create the final piece,” she says. “As with most mediums,

it’s a conversation between technique and concept.”

Her new Cage bangle is made using a selective laser sintering printer that solidifies nylon powder in whatever form she designs. The process, she says, is ideal for jewelry

with fine details or moving parts, and the material is porous, which allows Eife to dye the pieces any color, including the bright hues of her recent work.

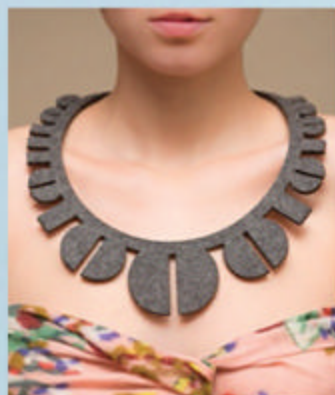
“Most of my pieces are made with this printer,” she explains,

“though I am working on a few new ideas. Sometimes I have a concept, like in the Binary jewelry, and other times it is just an exploration of form and geometry.” And the best part about it? “When it is all done, you can wear it. It’s very rewarding.”



mariaeife.com

Natalie Hope McDonald is a writer and editor in Philadelphia.



Star Cage hoops, 2013, laser-sintered nylon, sterling silver

LEFT: The **Binary :) necklace** (2009), of laser-cut felt, is based on the binary code of emoticons.



Eife likes selective laser sintering because it can print moving parts. The **Linked Loops bangle** (2013) is made of four interlocking parts printed in one piece.

Dirt To Dye

On their farm and in the studio, Rowland and Chinami Ricketts are carrying forward indigo traditions.

STORY BY

Diane Daniel



ABOVE:
Rowland Ricketts
Noren Partition 28, 2010,
hemp kibaba, indigo,
4.8 x 4.8 ft.

LEFT:
Chinami Ricketts
Plaid and dash ikat
kimono fabric, 2013,
cotton, indigo, 42 x 1.2 ft.

RIGHT: A kimono of
Chinami's fabric with
an indigo obi (sash).
"I'm very thankful to
be able to work with
this plant in a way that
people ... always have,"
she says.

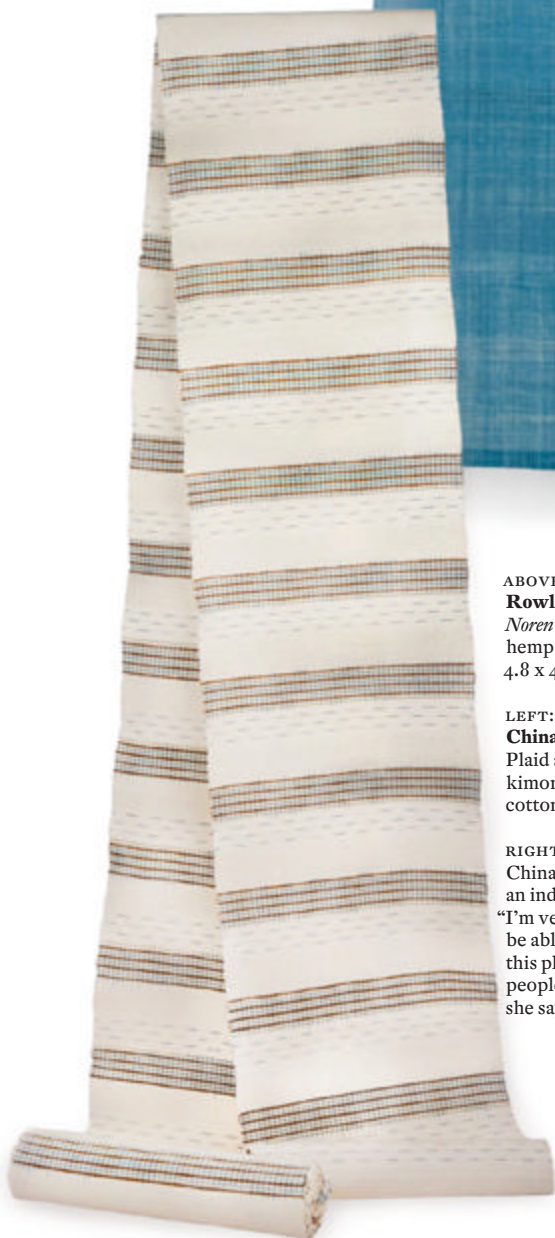


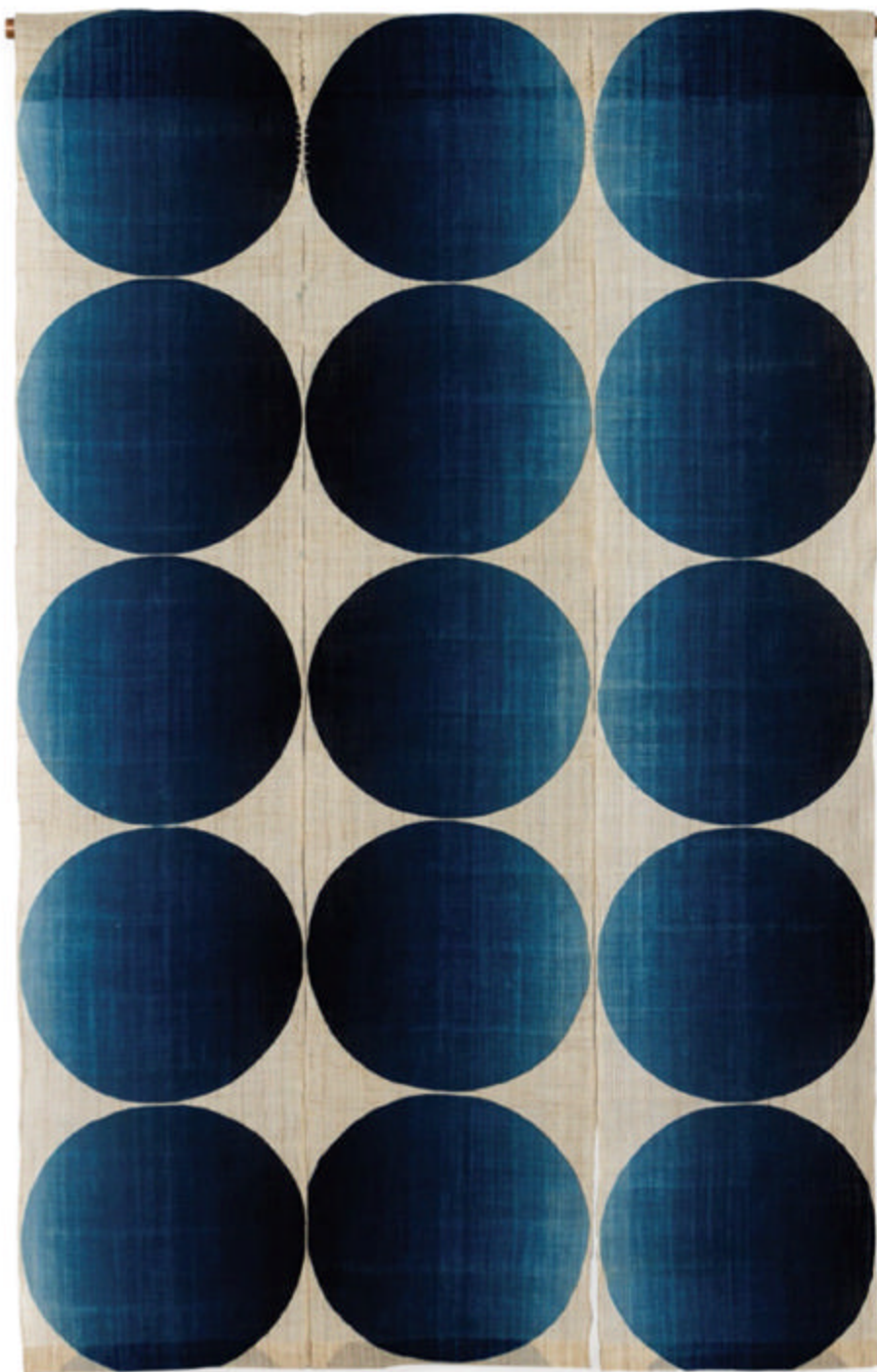
ROWLAND

RICKETTS IS HAPPIEST WHEN he's blue – or at least when he's planting, harvesting, composting, and fermenting the dye-producing indigo plants he cultivates with his wife, Chinami.

The couple met in 1997 when both were apprentices at the Furusho indigo dyeing studio in Chinami's hometown of Tokushima, Japan. Since

2006, they have lived in Bloomington, Indiana, where Rowland is assistant professor of textiles at Indiana University. Along with teaching, farming, and dyeing, Rowland channels indigo's energy into art installations that draw attention to the source and its centuries-old traditions. For Chinami's part, she more sparingly incorporates indigo in the yardage she





LEFT:
Rowland Ricketts
Noren Partition 27,
2009, hemp kibiru,
indigo, 4.7 x 3 ft.

Chinami Ricketts
White ikat with blue
and brown check
pattern kimono fabric,
2011, cotton, indigo,
42 x 1.2 ft.

weaves for kimonos and obis (sashes) using the dye-resist ikat technique.

It was in high school that Rowland first visited Japan, a trip that propelled him to study Japanese at Wesleyan University. After college, he took a job teaching English at a rural Japanese high school and lived in an old farmhouse, where he met people working

with natural dyes, inspiring him to learn the process.

“Learning about plant dyes and how to garden really opened my eyes to the historical roots of craft, which is that all craft traditions are formed through the intimate relationship of people and their immediate environment – food, clothes, shelter, and the materials to meet their needs,” Rowland says.

After their apprenticeships at the Furusho studio, the couple lived in Japan for several years, with Chinami apprenticing with Yumie Aoto, a well-known ikat kimono fabric weaver, and Rowland farming indigo and dyeing textiles for clothing and interiors.

“After doing production work for a couple years, there were all these other ideas around indigo

I was interested in exploring, and I felt like art was a good way of doing it,” he says.

They moved to the United States in 2003. Rowland earned an MFA in fiber at Cranbrook, followed by a one-year residency at Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, and then the teaching job in Bloomington; they bought their 6-acre farm just outside of town in 2008.

Indigo naturally fosters community, linking growers and processors, dye-makers and artists.



ABOVE: Rowland's *Immanent Blue* (2013), installed here at the University of Louisville, features indigo-dyed hemp and wool, as well as dried plants.

CENTRAL IMAGE: Rowland installed locks of dyed wool – 1,200 of them – for a 2010 show at Douglas Dawson Gallery in Chicago.

“The university position has really been a godsend in that it’s freed me up from worrying about how to survive, so I can make what I want,” says Rowland.

His installations, which focus on the plant and its deep hues, have included blue felted stones, billowing and bulbous sheets of cloth, videos of the plant, and even dried indigo leaves that gallerygoers can touch.

“The blue itself is not just a color, but the knowledge that



For Japan's National Cultural Festival in 2012, Rowland created the public art project *I Am Ai, You Are Ai*, a celebration of the Tokushima region's indigo heritage. "Ai" is Japanese for indigo dye.

is embodied with the entire process. Seeds, raising plants, harvest, drying, composting, all the way through to dyeing are so much more profound and meaningful than simply mixing the dye," Rowland says.

The couple's farming has been made easier with the purchase of a Japanese indigo harvester, funded through a United States Artists Fellowship awarded to Rowland in 2012. Still, the agricultural and extraction

processes are laborious and lengthy – just under a year from dirt to dye. They need 440 pounds of dried indigo leaf to sustain the composting process for 100 days and concentrate the dye. The composted leaves are called *sukumo*, which is then fermented in an alkali liquid made from wood ash and limestone.

After years of working largely independently, the partners, who are both 44 and have three

young children, will soon begin collaborating on home products.

"I'll continue what I've been doing, but Rowland and I are making new designs together for things that are useful to people in their day-to-day life that highlight the indigo we grow," says Chinami. Items will likely include textiles for table and bed.

Adding a production line creates a need for more indigo, and, like a chef lining up local

produce suppliers, Rowland is expanding indigo production to nearby organic farms.

"I see it as a very meaningful way of bringing this dye and these plants into the community," Rowland says. "That's one of the things I love about the tradition – it's so much bigger than the individual."



rickettsindigo.com

Diane Daniel is a writer based in Florida and the Netherlands.

Natural Curiosity

SPOTTED BY
Dakota Sexton

Seven artists answer
the siren song of
the great outdoors.



◀ The uncanny assemblages that Chicago artist **Jessica Joslin** builds out of materials such as antique chandeliers, velvet, and old gloves often evoke the Victorian era and its zeal for natural history and arcane technology. *Theodora* appears thoroughly mechanical yet ready to take flight at any moment.
jessicajoslin.com



David Ettinger

▲ How does Chicago artist **Dolan Geiman** describe his aesthetic? As “contemporary art with a Southern accent,” an apt way to introduce his menagerie of animal assemblages influenced by his childhood on a Virginia farm and work as a Forest Service naturalist.
dolangeiman.com

▼ For sculptural works such as *Mamont*, made of walnut, **Laura Buchan** draws inspiration from creatures both living and extinct – in this case, an octopus and a woolly mammoth. The artist, who lives in Portland, Oregon, chooses these juxtapositions to draw attention to issues such as dwindling biodiversity and mass extinction.
laurabuchan.com



Rachel Oliveri



▲ To create big, botanical beauties such as these 26-inch chrysanthemums, San Francisco artist **Tiffanie Turner** works with heavy-gauge Italian crepe paper, a material that provides ample ways to express the ephemeral life of a flower, from full bloom to eventual decay.
papelsf.com

Lynn Thompson



➤ By some estimates, there are between 25,000 and 30,000 species of orchids. Seattle glass artist **Debora Moore** has traveled the world to study this mesmerizing family of flowers and re-imagines their elegance in work such as her Gigantica series, which is influenced by the symbiotic relationship between orchids and insects. deboramoore.com



♣ Inspired by the folk tales he grew up with, self-taught Yorkshire artist **Mister Finch** creates whimsical insects and other critters from forgotten scraps of fabric. Each work is a “storytelling creature,” says the artist, “for people who are also a little lost, found, and forgotten.” This moth appears in his recently published book *Mister Finch: Living in a Fairytale World* (Glitterati Incorporated). mister-finch.com

Jason Dowdle



➤ Is it a piece of wood? Or a functional teapot? In the work of North Carolina ceramist **Eric Serritella**, clay intimately mimics the nuances of birch bark, weathered logs, and even charred tree limbs. Serritella wants his work to foster environmental awareness and encourage viewers to “walk with softer steps.” ericserritella.com

Crafted Lives

Mixed Media

Artist Brigitte Bouquet blends the natural and handcrafted in her home and in her work.

INTERVIEW BY *Liz Logan*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY *John Midgley*

IN HER LARGE SCULPTURES, artist Brigitte Bouquet often combines objects from nature with intricately handcrafted ceramics and textiles, so it makes sense that her home is also something of a hybrid. Her five-floor townhouse in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn mixes a modern, minimalist aesthetic with cozy antiques, flea-market finds, and her own handcrafted details. In 2013, the largely self-taught artist started Arthouse480, an annual event in which she opens her home to the public as a sort of gallery. (The 2015 event took

place in March.) We talked to the Dutch-born Bouquet about how she crafts the space where she lives and works.

Who lives here, and how did you come to live in this house?

I live here with my husband, Dick De Lange. We've been together for 20 years, since back when I was living in the Netherlands. We moved several times for Dick's job in advertising; we lived in Chicago, then Australia, and landed in New York in 2007. A few years later we bought this brownstone, and it was a dump! We fixed





The Brooklyn home of Dick De Lange and Brigitte Bouquet is a haven for flea-market finds, antiques from around the world, De Lange's hand-made furniture, and Bouquet's art.

Bouquet's favorite spot is the studio: "It makes me want to work."



An antique candelabra from Bouquet's native Netherlands, a pair of marriage dolls from Australia, and art by European friends are among the couple's worldly possessions.

TOP: Bouquet designed the gray tiles that grace her ground-floor studio. Her husband built the worktable.

it up; Dick is incredibly handy, and every weekend we work on the house.


In the kitchen, you have your pottery and then you also have your sculptures, which combine ceramics with wood, fabric, and other materials. How do you manage your different interests?

In Amsterdam, I was focused solely on pottery and had my own lines. I learned traditional Dutch ceramics by apprenticing with a Delft blue bisque painter in the mid-'90s, and then I came up with my own modern take on Delft blue. When we moved away, it freed me up to experiment, and I started combining ceramics with other materials and doing the large-scale pieces that are on display here. I don't make pottery so much anymore.

How do you describe your decorating aesthetic?

With my work, I often find something in nature – like





LEFT:
Bouquet embellished
her handprinted
Wool Quilt (2013)
with embroidery,
small feathers, and
ceramic pieces.

“A kimono is so serene,
and I wanted to make a
whimsical but also kind
of decayed thing,” says
Bouquet of *Bird’s Nest
Kimono* (2014), which
hangs in her studio.



Bouquet made *Tulip Fields* (2006) as a gift for her husband. The hundreds of ceramic clogs are an homage to the neatly aligned fields of flowers that bloom in the Netherlands in the spring.

RIGHT: De Lange built the kitchen cabinets out of old doors and reclaimed wood. Bouquet designed the hand-stamped dinnerware.

beautiful gray driftwood, which I find by the river here in Brooklyn – and then start creating based on the shape.

Our house is kind of like that, too. Our style is handmade and bohemian. In addition to handmade things, we have design pieces from flea markets, like the different lamps hanging above our dining room table.

At the same time, our aesthetic is also sleek, contemporary, and sort of minimalist; we don't like to have too many things.

How are your sculptures, ceramics, and textiles incorporated into the house?

On the main floor of the house, we have a black washroom in which the walls are covered in glossy black ceramic tiles that I made, and Dick and I designed and made the chandelier. You can also see my ceramic tiles in my studio and the kitchen. I recently started designing wallpaper that's similar to my printed textiles, and I wanted to have some wallpaper up for the next Arthouse480 this



“our aesthetic is sort of minimalist.”



In De Lange's office: antlers from Sweden, shark jaws from Mexico, and a firefighter helmet that belonged to Bouquet's father. Bouquet designed the lamp base.



spring. My finished sculptures are hanging in the public spaces of the house. Then my “quilts” – made of upholstery fabric that I printed on and then embellished with ceramic pieces and other things – are hanging in our bedroom and the guest bedroom, because I like to look at them; some of them are still in progress.

What's your favorite spot in the house?

My studio, on the ground floor. It makes me want to work! Sometimes we'll have breakfast or a drink down there. We knocked down walls to make the floor into one big space, and the walls, floor, and ceiling we painted white, so it always feels light and airy. There's a garden out back, and it's super-quiet. Dick built my big work table and my storage bureau. I keep everything in drawers; I'm very orderly.

Do you have a favorite piece that's on display in your home right now?

My Bird's Nest Kimono (2014), which recently came back from my fall solo exhibition at the Hammond Museum in North Salem, New York. My mother is an expert seamstress, and she helped me sew the kimono out of linen that I ripped into strips and printed on. On top of the fabric, there are these little birds' nests that I make with ceramic pieces and crocheted copper wire.

Bouquet's Circle series represents the undulating surfaces found in nature.



De Lange built this storage unit, a home for supplies and little treasures, for Bouquet's studio; she calls it "the magic cabinet."

TOP: De Lange designed and built the desk in his office. The room also features works by Bouquet.

A kimono is so serene, and I wanted to make a whimsical but also kind of decayed thing.

Tell us about some of the other key pieces in your home.

With my Circle series, the idea is to zoom in on scenes in nature – grass, a frozen river, coral, the reddish colors of the earth, the ocean – and recreate their undulating surfaces with thousands of tiny textured pieces of ceramics. Close up, the pieces look totally different from when you're far away. *Eyes in Disguise* (2007), which is hanging in Dick's study, is meant to look like fish skin. It's made up of ceramic pieces shaped like eyes. I like to experiment with different glazes; that piece looks brown, but when the sun shines in, it turns brilliant copper. In the stairwell is my blue-green circle, *Watching Waves* (2009). I'm working on an orange and firecracker-red circle now. The circles are time-consuming and monotonous, so I take breaks and work on other things.

Your piece *Tulip Fields* (2006) is such an imposing centerpiece in the main living area; tell us about it.

When we open the house for Arthouse480, everything is for sale except for that piece, which was a gift for Dick. It's made out of 464 ceramic Dutch clogs in 32 different colors, each hand-painted with traditional Dutch imagery of windmills and tulips. I'm fascinated by the tulip fields in the Netherlands and their glorious colors. They're so straight and geometric. I started in ceramics because of the glazes. I just love color.

✦ brigittebouquet.tumblr.com
Liz Logan is a Brooklyn freelance writer whose work has appeared in ARTNews, O, the Oprah Magazine, and Martha Stewart Living.

RIGHT: Thousands of tiny ceramic pieces make up the textured ripples of Bouquet's *Watching Waves* (2009).





STORY BY *Joyce Lovelace*
PORTRAIT BY *Cary and Babs Wolinsky*



Droplets, 2014,
polyester,
flower stamens,
4.5 in. dia.

MARIKO KUSUMOTO MAKES sculptures that have a quality of theater. She's not much of a moviegoer, though. So when the man came into the Marin County, California, gallery, wheeling a bicycle and sweating in cycling clothes, she thought he was the photographer arriving to shoot her pieces. "Look who's here!" said the gallery owner, greeting him. Kusumoto's American-born husband murmured to her in her native Japanese, "Do you know who this is?"

"I looked right at him," says Kusumoto, "and asked, 'Are you the photographer?'" That got a laugh from everyone, including the visitor, none other than the actor Robin Williams. He was humble and kind, she recalls, and a lot like his on-screen persona – animated, cracking jokes, talking in funny voices. As it turned out, he owned one of her sculptures. Called *Kisekae Dolls*, it consists of a

RIGHT:
Head, 2014,
polyester,
2.5 x 2 x 2 in.



wooden display case housing a pair of metal dress-up figures, boy and girl, along with a wardrobe of tiny garments, masks, wigs, and accessories. The dolls can be costumed as different characters – old-world Japanese geisha or samurai, modern Western-style blondes, a bicultural mix – and worn as jewelry.

"My work is playful in some ways," Kusumoto says. "Maybe that's why he liked the piece."

Playful, changeable, eccentric – Kusumoto's art is all that and more, and one can easily imagine its appeal to a quirky genius like Williams. For 20 years the artist has worked mainly with metals – etched, carved, electroformed, and hammered copper, silver, brass, and nickel silver – combining them with decals and found objects to create intricate, tabletop-size sculptures. And lately she's been exploring a new medium, folding and molding fabric into enchanting

*Kusumoto's
fiber art
looks like
a departure –
but it shares
the whimsical
DNA of her
metal sculpture.*



Ryounkaku is both a vertical board game and an homage to a famous Tokyo department store tower destroyed in 1923 by an earthquake. The building was Japan's first Western-style skyscraper as well as home to its first elevator.

Ryounkaku, 2006, copper, brass, nickel silver, magnets, decals, 27 x 9 x 4 in. (open)

LEFT:
Kisekai Dolls is a riff on traditional Japanese dress-up figurines. The pair – shown here in two get-ups – have a wardrobe of tiny costumes and can also be worn as jewelry.

Kisekai Dolls (detail), 1998, copper, bronze, brass, sterling silver, nickel silver, wood, rice paper, coral, 4.25 in. high

wearable forms. At the heart of all of her work is wonder and discovery. “I’ve always enjoyed surprising people,” she says.

Born in 1967, Kusumoto grew up in southern Japan, in a 400-year-old Buddhist temple where her father was the priest. She recalls the hushed serenity of the place, the dimness, the marks on the stone steps from centuries of rain-drops from the roof. “I saw history everywhere throughout the temple. I liked the tranquility, that subtle light that creates a sort of spiritual world.”

Metal was a familiar material to her. “One of my chores was polishing the metal ornaments. So I was always admiring these elaborately crafted pieces,” she says. Though Kusumoto is not religious today, her artworks are, in a sense, expressions of the Buddhist teaching of impermanence:

They invite us to contemplate, in the moment, as their secrets and delights unfold.

She always wanted to be an artist, and majored in painting and printmaking at Musashino Art University in Tokyo. She remembers being attracted to the copper plates used for etching: “I liked the metal itself more than the images printed on paper.” As a graduate student at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, she continued with printmaking but was never quite satisfied. Then, just before earning her MFA in 1995, she took a few classes in metal sculpture. “I decided, ‘This is it.’”

Embracing metal as her medium, she developed her signature style early on – the house, box, or stage format, complex compartments filled with curiosities, a surreal aesthetic – and almost right away



M. Lee Fatherree, courtesy of Mobilia Gallery



*Kusumoto's
deft sculptures
invite us
to interact,
offering a
treasure hunt
of hidden
components.*

This tiny sushi shop is Kusumoto's favorite work to date. Each piece cracks open to reveal spectacularly detailed, surreal surprises – from a tiny Buddha to etched edamame beans.

Kaitenzushi,
2004, copper, brass,
sterling silver, nickel
silver, bronze, found
objects, acrylic paint,
enamel, 24k gold leaf,
13 x 12 x 12 in.

began exhibiting at the Susan Cummins Gallery in Mill Valley, California, a leading venue for contemporary art jewelry and metalwork. (It was there that Robin Williams purchased her piece.) Cummins closed shop in 2002, and Kusumoto joined with Mobilia Gallery in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 2003, which has been her main dealer ever since. In 2005 she and her husband moved from San Francisco to the Boston area for their now-teenage daughter's education and to be close to the gallery.

Also, she says, "I missed the four seasons."

Kusumoto has always called on her Japanese identity in her artwork. She takes inspiration from childhood memories of her mother's *tansu* cabinets with their many little drawers, the promise of mystery and magic inside. She also admits to having a typically Japanese love for elaborate packaging: "When we give a gift, first there's the box, and then you open layer after layer. It's part of the fun." *Ryounkaku* (2006) is her tour-de-force reimagining of a

famous Tokyo department store tower built in 1890 and destroyed in an earthquake in 1923. (Her version functions as a vertical board game.) *Kaiten-zushi* (2004), her favorite of all of her works to date, is a restaurant where a rotating tray serves sushi pieces that open up to contain – what? Little people eating sushi? A Buddha figurine? A baby adrift in a sea of octopus tentacles? The possibilities are as fantastical as they are exquisitely rendered. Having lived in the United States for two decades now,

Kusumoto also takes on Western culture in works such as *Bloomingdale's* (2007), her homage to another department store, this one quintessentially American. Other themes blend East and West, reflecting her assimilation to her adopted country.

Over time her work has grown more complex in technique and concept. In 2013 she finished what she considers her most ambitious piece, *Pachinko Voyage*, inspired by the Japanese pinball game. "It was difficult mechanically



Bird, 2014,
polyester,
2 x 4 x 1.5 in.

Inspired by an 1886 illustrated catalogue, *Bloomingdale's* opens like a book, each page re-creating a floor of the department store. Behind them all resides a tiny chest of drawers, home to a series of brooches with moving parts (opposite).

Bloomingdale's, 2007, nickel silver, sterling silver, brass, copper, decals, diamond, 7.5 x 8 x 6 in. (closed)



and visually, and took me a year to make. After that, I needed a break. I was so tired of using images. I wanted to do something more abstract, in a totally opposite material. So I chose fabric.”

The result is her purely lovely new series of wearable pieces in a rainbow of colors, including delicate silk flowers she crafts using *tsumami zaiku* (a traditional origami-like folding technique) and ethereal, nature-inspired shapes, like seaforms or mushrooms, that she molds in synthetic fabric

via a heat-setting method. “It looks like a totally different artist,” she says of this direction, and it’s true, though her distinctive playfulness and attention to fine detail are still very much apparent.

This past fall and winter, a collection of these pieces was shown at the Craft and Folk Art Museum in Los Angeles, alongside fiber work by leading artists in the Textile Society of America’s first juried exhibition (titled, appropriately enough, “New Directions”). Displayed together in glass

cases, Kusumoto’s flowers and forms looked so charming, so utterly engaging, that you longed to reach through the glass and touch them. In fact, no matter the medium, she considers a work of hers complete only when someone interacts with it. “I want people to be involved with my work,” she says. If the multiple components of her metal sculptures offer a but-wait-there’s-more experience, her textile pieces, with their subtle shapes and joyful hues, evoke a feeling of but-wait-I-want-more.

So what entertainments does this ever-evolving artist have in store for us? For now, Kusumoto is reveling in the softness, translucency, and color spectrum of fabric. She’ll return to metal eventually, she says, but in a fresh way that will likely involve her new passion.

“I want to utilize the character of fabric combined with metal, to create something never seen before.”

✦
mobilia-gallery.com
Joyce Lovelace is American Craft’s contributing editor.

*No matter
the medium,
Kusumoto’s
work is
as exquisitely
rendered
as it is
fantastical.*



ROOT AND BRANCH

*With her distinguished career,
Mary Jackson has left her mark
on a long tradition.*

“IT WAS LIKE AN AWAKENING.”

That’s Mary Jackson, the nation’s most celebrated maker of sweetgrass baskets, describing a trip she took to West Africa in 1988, a pilgrimage of sorts. Her ancestors were brought from there to America on slave ships 300 years before, bringing with them a technique and style of basketry handed down to her through generations.

She was deeply moved, she recalls, to see those familiar coiled forms still being made in Africa.

“It gave me inspiration and encouragement to continue my work. It was wonderful to stand where my roots started.”

For some 35 years, Jackson has created baskets true to that long, unbroken tradition, yet with a modern look and an

expressive, sculptural flair that’s distinctively hers. She weaves them out of the strong, pliable sweetgrass that grows around the marshes and swamps of coastal South Carolina’s Low Country. A descendant of the Gullah community, Jackson has lived there almost all her life. She sews the grasses with palmetto strips, sparingly adding design accents of bulrush and

STORY BY *Joyce Lovelace*

PORTRAIT BY *Michael Mauney*







pine needles. All are the same native materials used since the early plantation days, when they were harvested and woven into containers for agricultural and household use.

Elegant and fine, Jackson's baskets are shown in major art museums and prized by collectors around the world, including Prince Charles and Empress Michiko of Japan. She has received the highest honors, from a MacArthur Foundation "genius grant" to a National Endowment for the Arts Heritage Fellowship. "I always wanted to keep the tradition in mind, to respect what was passed down to me," she says of her craft, which she learned from her mother and grandmother at the age of 4. "I just wanted to bring it to another level."

Just as surely as their tightly woven coils held grain and cotton, sweetgrass baskets bound families and communities together. All the summers of Jackson's childhood, siblings, aunts, cousins, and neighbors would gather to make baskets, as their forebears did for centuries. "It was a way of life. Every day, after household chores, we were required to learn how to make baskets," she remembers, adding with a wry chuckle, "it wasn't fun."

As local women had done since the 1930s, her mother and her friends put up little roadside stands where they sold their baskets to tourists. Jackson

Jackson's materials are the same as those used since early plantation days.

had other ambitions and headed to New York City, where she went to secretarial school and worked as a secretary. There she began to develop her artistic eye.

"I used to visit museums and art galleries. I always had an appreciation for art," she says. "I collected contemporary paintings and sculptures. It was just something that I did. At that time I didn't study names of artists. It was whatever I saw that I liked, abstract as well as figures, things I thought would be wonderful to have in my home."

She moved back to South Carolina in 1972, married her husband, Stoney, a few years later, and continued working as a secretary. In 1980, after their young son





At 70, Jackson remains prolific, working on 10 to 15 baskets at a time, and sometimes laboring until midnight “if I feel up to it,” she says.

was diagnosed with chronic asthma, she quit her office job to be at home with him. It was then that she decided to dust off her basketry skills. “My mother always said, ‘It’s good to learn more than one thing.’”

She started making baskets for her own use, experimenting with new designs. “They were different from the designs I had learned growing up, different from what people were making in the everyday work in the community,” she recalls.



Jackson uses sweetgrass, pine needles, palmetto, and bulrush to make her baskets. These measure from 9 inches to about 17 inches high.

TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT:
Market Basket,
1989

Traditional Grain Storage Basket II,
1989

Flared-Top Vase,
1987

Covered Box, 2006

LEFT:
Untitled with Handle,
1987

“I was doing larger forms, more contemporary designs, things not done before in this tradition, like sculptural handles or flat, disc-like shapes.” To earn extra money, she began selling them at a local market where her grandmother had sold baskets, and had great success. Word of her unusual style and superb craftsmanship spread, and in 1984 she was invited to present her baskets at the Smithsonian Craft Show, the major turning point in her career. Suddenly she was sought after for commissions, from admirers who appreciated her work as fine art. “It was amazing to me when I found that baskets were collected by people from all over the country.”

Today Jackson is regarded as something of a national treasure, a mantle she wears lightly. She does, however, take very seriously her role as an advocate for sweetgrass basketry. That came into sharp focus for her in the late 1980s, when she and other local makers saw their sweetgrass supply begin to dwindle, threatened by land development.

“These grasses are hardy. The only thing that really affects them is a bulldozer,” she says. “We knew that in order to save the tradition, we had to see what we could possibly do to bring them back.” As founding president of the Mount Pleasant Sweetgrass Basket Makers Association, she worked for a decade with local craftspeople,



Ginger, 1997



**Vase with
Handle II,
2014**

government officials, preservationists, and a Clemson University horticulturalist, salvaging grasses from sites slated for development and replanting them on donated, protected lands. Thanks to their efforts, sweetgrass – uprooted but resilient, like Jackson’s ancestors – continues to thrive in the region today and has even acquired cachet as an element in landscape design.

As for Jackson, 70, she remains as busy as ever, making baskets for clients willing to wait up to several years for a one-of-a-kind piece. Stoney, now retired from his job in health care, still harvests her grasses every spring and summer, as he has done throughout their marriage. They live on a sea island north of Charleston, in a house filled with their collections, including “a ton of baskets, from almost every culture.” Immediate and extended family are all nearby, including their daughter, who runs the business end of Jackson’s practice, and their teenage granddaughter, who enjoys basketry when she’s not busy with studies and extracurricular activities.

“Today the schoolwork is so intense. It’s so different, of course, from when I grew up. We had no computers, no cell phones, no movie theaters in our rural community,” Jackson

Photos: Jack Alterman



*Jackson
worked for
a decade to
address the
dwindling
supply of
sweetgrass.*



Spanning 3.5 feet,
this basket took three
years to complete.
Jackson considers it
among the most spec-
tacular pieces she has
ever made.

What matters most to Jackson now is raising awareness of basketry as an art form.



Double Lip Accordion with Handle, 2014



Diploma Basket, 1992

reflects. “Basketmaking, this kind that I do, coiling, it’s a very hard process. It looks simple when you see the finished product. But you have to be very determined and very interested in doing it, because otherwise you won’t do it.” She encourages young people to pursue whatever art form does interest them, “because art is so important in our lives.”

She has a studio in Charleston, “a very comfortable little space” in an office building, where she puts in long hours of painstaking handwork that slowly gives rise to beautiful forms. (“I keep company with the TV on,” she says.) When she goes home at day’s end, she might pick up one of a number of commissions-in-progress that are always around the house. “I work sometimes until midnight if I feel up to it,” she says. “Right now I have at least 10 to 15 baskets at different stages. I’d like to get a lot of things completed – that’s my goal.” While the work still excites her, she looks forward to catching up and slowing down, spending more time with her family.



Urn, 1986



Untitled, 1996



Moses Basket, 1988

Asked what she considers her most ambitious or challenging piece, she answers without hesitation: a shallow form 3.5 feet in diameter, with a burst of grass flowing out, commissioned by a client to be the sole, dramatic piece of wall art in a particular room. (A photo of it hanging in place graces the cover of *Simplicity*, a new book on interior design, by Nancy Braithwaite.) It took three years to weave, and at times she had to stand on a scaffold or lie flat on the floor to get it done. “It is one of the most spectacular baskets that I have ever made,” she says. “It’s the only basket I will ever make on that scale, and it’s one that I am very, very proud of. I convinced myself to do it, and I did it.” What does she call it? *Never Again*.

What matters most to Jackson now is raising awareness of basketry as an art form. “I’m amazed and thrilled that all this recognition has come,” she says of her distinguished career, “but I see it as something that is benefiting to everyone – not just my work or my tradition, but other artists from all over the country who have this passion for baskets.” She’s proud of her contribution to the field and grateful for the opportunity “to bring something very special, that people will enjoy for generations to come.” No doubt her ancestors would be proud, too.



Joyce Lovelace is American Craft’s contributing editor.

Dome Cover Box, 2004



Vase, 1986



IT'S ABOUT TIME

Steven Siegel's work challenges our idea of permanence – and our place on the planet.

STORY BY *Brian K. Mahoney*
PORTRAIT BY *Chris Callis*

WHEN STEVEN SIEGEL SITS down for an interview, he's just returned from installing his latest paper sculpture, *Hill and Valley*, and he's hopping a flight to Italy the next day to scout a possible site for another installation. Surrounded by woods in Red Hook, New York, two hours north of New York City, his workshop is a neat, utilitarian space, more like a carpentry shop than an artist's studio, reflecting the 20 years Siegel spent as a carpenter and cabinet maker while his art career built momentum. Lining the walls are pieces under construction – he isn't sure if they're finished – from his latest mixed-media series, *Building Pictures*. With dense expanses of yarn, acrylic-soaked paper, work gloves, hiking boots, skulls, and a hand-saw, the pieces defy categorization and easy interpretation, yet their technical sophistication is undeniable and their juxtapositions of color and form striking. "When you look at my work, the techniques that you're seeing [are things] somebody else might be doing, sort of, but nobody ever taught me," says Siegel. "I just figured them out – because I want to be the new cells in the petri dish that grow into something. I'm really interested to see whatever things I have, how they evolve."

That's Siegel newest work. But the paper came first.

Hill and Valley is 30,000 pounds of paper stacked 15 feet high and undulating 90 feet around 28 lodgepoles pines in a sculpture park in Lincoln, Montana. From a distance, the installation looks like stacked stone, a whimsical fortress wall

Post-consumer materials are a gold mine for Steven Siegel, who makes both wall works and outdoor sculptures. Here he stands between **Buried** (2014) in the foreground and **Montana** (2014).







*"I want to be the new
cells in the petri dish that
grow into something."*





ABOVE:
Biography (2008-13), 156 feet across, contains thousands of everyday objects, from computer parts to plastic zip-ties. Siegel has seen it in its entirety only through a composite photo.

BELOW:
Some of the rubber tentacles of **Carbon** (2013), a huge work on the façade of the building that housed the now-defunct Australian Office of Climate Change.



snaking through a pine forest. It's held together by gravity and 400 pounds of 5-inch nails, of which Siegel hammered his fair share during the three weeks he and an army of volunteers assembled it. "My right arm is still suffering as a result of that one, and I will probably never recover," says Siegel, a fit 61, and an avid tennis player and hiker.

On site, Siegel played the role of general contractor and raconteur, simultaneously directing and entertaining his troops. "I do whatever it takes to engage, involve, and give ownership of the process to everyone working," says Siegel. "This ranges from private discussions with students about their hopes and directions to group interactions about the craziness of stacking newspapers in the forest to a little politics (careful where you are!) to the occasional joke."

For Siegel, the community that develops during the construction of a piece like *Hill and Valley* becomes an integral part of the artwork. "The memory is as much about the experience of building the project and having a good time as it is about the finished piece," he says. "The work is easily taught, and it just happens. But there's a real bonding that occurs through a shared experience. It's like a barn-raising."

Hill and Valley is the largest of Siegel's nearly 35 paper works on four continents. (His first piece, *New Geology #1*, was sited at the Snug Harbor Cultural Center on Staten Island in 1990, not far from what was then the world's largest landfill.) These pieces and other landscape work – bales of crushed plastic, giant worms made of wood mulch, cubes of compressed bespoke Italian sneakers – place him in the land art tradition of artists such as Robert Smithson and James Turrell, but not quite of it.

The canonical land artists were seeking new means of expression and settings beyond traditional gallery walls, rearranging the natural landscape in artful, sometimes monumental ways; Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* comes to mind. Siegel is more interested in how humans alter materials and then reintroduce them into the landscape. He's created a series of sited work from surplus industrial materials, as well as materials borrowed from recycling centers. A partial list of ingredients in his concoctions: car parts, plastic bottles, grass, computer waste, aluminum cans, shredded tires. Siegel calls it "an interruption of the solid waste stream."

His fascination with post-consumer materials and site-specific sculptures has earned Siegel a reputation as the "recycling artist," a label he resists. "These materials are free and available in enormous quantities," says Siegel. "Recycling is interesting, consumerism is interesting – that's all part of the picture here – but that's just the surface."

One of the great sea beasts dwelling below the surface in Siegel's work is his preoccupation with time – deep time, as the geologists call it: the disconcerting fact that the Earth is 4.5 billion years old. John McPhee, in his book *Basin and Range* (a major influence on Siegel, who in his 20s hiked some of the Western landscapes in the book), explains deep time like this: "Consider the Earth's history as the old measure of the English yard, the distance from the King's nose to the tip of his outstretched hand. One stroke of a nail file on his middle finger erases human history."

Time's influence on Siegel's paper works is straightforward. Indeed, the fanned newspapers look like geological striations in a splintering shale cliff. And decomposition is built into their



Carbon photo: James Richard / Handsare; photo: Douglas Baz



ABOVE:
Hill and Valley (2014) was a community effort, built with volunteers from around the site in Lincoln, Montana. Siegel values the communal process as much as he does the product.

RIGHT:
Freight and Barrel, made of crushed plastic containers, at the 2004 Three Rivers Arts Festival in Pittsburgh.

LEFT:
Handsaw, 2014, mixed media, gloves, saw, 4.3 x 5.9 x .9 ft.



DNA; a handful of the pieces, not yet 15 years old, are already in a state of advanced degradation, if they haven't been torn down and carted off for safety reasons. "What is permanence?" Siegel asks. "Do we really believe that humans and their things are going to be here forever, as long as the sun is going to last? I highly doubt that. When we talk about permanence, it's all relative." Saying this, the artist also acknowledges his desire to create more lasting work. "After doing 40-plus paper pieces and other temporary works that aren't built to last, it's really time to be making some more permanent work. It would be nice to know something will outlive me."

One of the most thrilling examples of Siegel's recent, more permanent work is *Carbon*, completed in 2013. The sculpture consists of five 100-foot rubber tentacles, seemingly ripped from H.R. Giger's sketchbook for *Alien*, latched onto the front of the Nishi building in Canberra, Australia. *Carbon* is menacing, magisterial, creepy-beautiful, and eco-conscious. The Nishi building is the former home of the Australian Department of Climate Change, which has since been abolished by a new conservative administration. The building is owned by a developer, not the Australian government, so *Carbon* is permanent – for the time being.

The work that will surely outlive Siegel is his magnum opus, *Biography*, which he worked on from 2008 to 2013. (Siegel doesn't say he's finished with the piece, only that he "paused" in 2013.) The 156-foot-long piece is composed of 95 separate sections of form, color, and materials that begin simply, erupt in complexity, settle down, and erupt again in a linear progression from right to left, ending with white objects

Siegel seeks to replicate nature's methodology through an evolutionary artistic process.



hurtling into a black void. On one level, it resembles a shag carpet gone horribly wrong. There are no discernible natural forms or figurative elements. Like the rest of Siegel's work, *Biography* doesn't imitate life – the classic artist's task of mimesis – but seeks to replicate nature's methodology through an evolutionary artistic process.

"Almost everything I do in the studio is based on very simple evolutionary principles," Siegel says. "The No. 1 principle is: Nothing is designed. But bits of each vocabulary move into the next phase. Some of them will be dropped, just like in the evolutionary process. The way it works is by contingency and mutation. When I was working on section 87, I had no idea what section 95 was going to look like."

The other thing about *Biography*: No one has ever seen it fully assembled – not even Siegel, and he's OK with that. "The idea with *Biography* was, like a geologic timeline, the viewer can never see the whole thing at once." Creating a work that's so big it can't be fully reckoned with in one shot – there's deep time at work again. If Siegel does start working on *Biography* again in five years, the intervening period will be like a gap in the fossil record, a meteor-strike disruption that picks up with the most recent work. Besides, what's five years when you're thinking in eons?

✦

stevensiegel.net

Brian K. Mahoney is editor of *Chronogram*, a lifestyle magazine covering the Hudson Valley.

Siegel's installations **Bridge 2** (2009, left) and **Like a Hive, Like an Egg** (2002, opposite) are on permanent display at Arte Sella, a sculpture park in the Italian Alps.

Photos: Steven Siegel



Creative Continuum



STORY BY

Diane Daniel

PHOTOGRAPHY BY

Irvin Serrano

*An accomplished
fiber artist
looking for a change,
Lissa Hunter
found working
with clay both
familiar and fresh.*

Lissa Hunter's studio in Portland, Maine, showcases the range of her work, from table-top ceramics to wall-mounted tableaux.





ABOVE:
From drawings to ceramics, there is a rich physicality and earthiness to Hunter's art.

RIGHT:
Fern tumblers,
2014, porcelain,
2.75 x 2 in. dia. each



THE WALLS AND SHELVES of Lissa Hunter's airy studio in downtown Portland, Maine, bear a rich assortment of vessels and drawings, providing a 35-year timeline of her work, mostly in fiber.

Coiled baskets sit atop counters and shelves, their surfaces

covered in paper – in some cases drawn on – the tones earthy and deep. Others are coated in encaustic wax, drawn into with designs. One particularly striking piece rests atop a pedestal, its off-white exterior decorated with an illustration of a dried branch whose leaves extend

up and onto a framed charcoal drawing on a gessoed wood panel placed above it, an evocative blending of forms.

A nearby tabletop displays yet another body of work: rows of ceramic vessels, a medium the artist had next to no hands-on familiarity with until three

years ago, when she followed the urge to break away from basketry.

Hunter's fiber sculptures have brought her awards and been purchased by collectors and museums, including the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery and the Museum of Fine



*Hunter
can't say
why or how
she chose
clay; she just
knew that
it felt right.*



ABOVE:
Forest for Trees,
2013, porcelain,
15 x 30 x 4.5 in.

LEFT:
The look of Hunter's
ceramic work represents
a continuation of her
aesthetic as much as a
switch in materials.

Arts, Boston, but she'd found herself aching for a change.

"A few years ago I was feeling as if I was repeating myself a lot with the basketry. I felt inauthentic," says Hunter, who holds two fine arts degrees and was a tenured assistant professor at Mansfield University of

Pennsylvania until 1979, when she left to pursue art full-time.

She can't pinpoint why or how she chose ceramics.

"You have something that works for you just below the level and you're not sure what it even is," she explains. "I probably saw some work that



Other photos (2): Irvin Serrano

resonated and thought, ‘Oh, that’s what pottery could be.’ It also helped that there was a pottery studio four blocks away, it wasn’t expensive, and I liked the teacher.”

In late 2011, Hunter started attending basic classes at Portland Pottery, learning how to build porcelain vessels both by coiling and slabs. Coiling felt familiar thanks to basketry, while the new medium enlivened the conversation between the material and her hands.

About two years later, she committed herself to ceramics even more, investing in an electric kiln.

“For two years, I thought, ‘This is just something I’m playing around with.’ I’m from Indiana – we don’t jump right into things,” she says with a laugh. “Even though it wasn’t hugely expensive, buying the kiln made it more real.”

Surveying the clay vessels in her studio, their tones, shapes, and designs convey

a continuation of her aesthetic and physicality as much as they do a switch in materials.

“It’s really all about the process,” she says. “That’s the key. Materials are a partner in the process.” Some of the ceramic pieces are sculptural and stand alone, while others are combined in visual collections that hark back to her basketry tableaux. One grouping of small black-and-white vessels with drawings on the surface represents Hunter’s first functional work – tumblers for juice, wine, or whatever.

“People can use them! How exciting is that?” she says with a look of delight. “I’ve never



had to think about size and surface in this way before.”

For those, she employs sgraffito to achieve a graphic look, first brushing on a coat of black underglaze and then scratching away to reveal white lines and eventually form shapes, or wiping away to reveal the white porcelain underneath. Some of her pieces are covered with images of rocks, water, and plants. (She keeps boxes of objects, including dried leaves and branches, in her studio for inspiration.) Others show appealing domestic scenes, including one ringed with clothes hanging on a line, complete with grass and dog.

Craft Gallery in Rockland, Maine, has featured her new work in three shows, and the response has been enthusiastic. Still, Hunter does not consider herself a ceramic artist, nor has she closed the door on fiber.

“I’d never say ‘I’m a potter.’ I say ‘I’m working with clay.’ I don’t know glazes, I don’t

Coming Home, 2013,
porcelain, charcoal,
wood panel, MDF, paint,
17 x 24 x 4.5 in.

Abby Johnson

Autumn Fern, 2012,
paper cord, waxed
linen thread, paper,
paint, charcoal,
wood panel, MDF,
79 x 19 x 8.5 in.



Irvin Serrano

*Hunter's
tableaux have
free spirits,
leaping from
clay to fiber,
from vessel
to the wall.*





Hunter's storage shelf is home to a happy family of "samples, rejects, and orphans."



To make her graphic tumblers, Hunter employs sgraffito, painting on black underglaze and then selectively scraping it off, revealing white clay underneath.

know a lot, and it's not my community, though the community has been very generous of spirit. It some ways it's more collaborative than basketmaking because of sharing kiln space, things like that."

Hunter plans to keep her ceramic forms simple and straightforward. "What I'm most interested in is ways of drawing on the surface. In that way, I can be in charge and it's mine," she says. "Of all the mediums, I feel like drawing is the most difficult thing to do. It's just you and this thing you do."

Whatever form art takes, Hunter says, artists relaying

what moves them is elemental, whether it is, in her case, assorted rocks and branches, a murder of crows, or laundry hanging on the line.

"It's an artist's job – and it's what's thrilling as an artist – to look at the world, try to understand it, and try to manifest that understanding into something that someone can tune into – even if it's something you drink your juice out of."

✦

lissahunter.com

Craft Gallery in Rockland, Maine, will show new work by Lissa Hunter in July. Diane Daniel is a writer based in Florida and the Netherlands.



*For Hunter,
clay is simply
another
way to work.
"Materials
are a partner
in the process."*



Showa Homage Basket, 1992, paper cord, raffia, waxed linen thread, paper, paint, 6 x 12 in. dia.

PROMOTION



▲
Klara Borbas
klaraborbas.etsy.com



▲
Chuck Solberg
mrgtstlbrg@aol.com



▶
Jennifer Merchant
jennifermerchantdesign.com



▲
Elliot Stith
elliottstithfinewoodworking.com



▶
Margaret Koop
mmkoopcollections.com

Design Finds

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inbloomjewelry.com



▲ **Kat Cole**
kat-cole.com

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Wood is a demanding medium - before the gouge hits the grain, a studio turner has already made many aesthetic choices. Join artists from the AAW to learn more about the design process and the many decisions a turner makes in selecting species, grain orientation, and finishes. woodturner.org

The Grand Hand Gallery

For more than 10 years, the Grand Hand Gallery has presented a curated selection of work by craft artists from Minnesota and across the country. Gallery artists will lead hands-on demonstrations of techniques used in their work. Gallery owner Ann Ruhr Pifer will lead discussions on incorporating fine craft into interior design and the Japanese concept of wabi-sabi,

which is part of the gallery's distinctive aesthetic. thegrandhand.com

Minnesota Center for Book Arts

See what contemporary artists are creating using the traditional craft of paper marbling. Watch as seasoned practitioners add color and pull patterned sheets of paper from the vat, then try your hand at pulling color. MCBA artists will also be demonstrating other book-related crafts featuring marbled paper. mnbookarts.org

Northern Clay Center

Artists from Northern Clay Center will be on hand demonstrating throwing and handbuilding techniques. Watch as they create vessels and objects from lumps of clay, and take your turn on the wheel. northernclaycenter.org

Peace Coffee

Roasting and delivering (by bike) fairly traded organic coffee in Minneapolis since 1996, Peace Coffee makes coffee something to experience. See how your daily cup begins as a seed half a world away, taste the unique nuances in brewing methods, and experiment with how coffee can complement many flavors. peacecoffee.com

Polymer Clay Guild of Minnesota

The Polymer Clay Guild of Minnesota invites you to contribute to their "Beads of Courage" community outreach program, making beads using simple, fun techniques. The beads will be donated to local hospitals, which distribute them to children undergoing cancer treatment. You can help them create these unique gifts. pcgmn.org

TeaSource

TeaSource has been serving more than 200 varieties of loose-leaf tea in the Twin Cities for nearly 20 years. Choose one of the six categories of *Camellia sinensis*, the tea plant, then be guided through the correct loose-leaf measurement, water temperature, and steep time; then enjoy your creation. TeaSource will also demonstrate different steeping methods, from the ancient *gong fu* tea ceremony to modern gravity pots. teasource.com

The Textile Center

Engage your whole body in fiber art with larger-than-life knitting, *kumihimo* braid-making, and weaving. Textiles are a large part of our lives, so get inspired and go big. textilecentermn.org



Urban Boatbuilders

Urban Boatbuilders will be constructing a boat on-site from start to finish. Stop by to talk with the knowledgeable staff and apprentices about their programs and the art of boatbuilding. urbanboatbuilders.org

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thebeerdabbler.com



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The American Craft Council is proud to partner with The Balvenie as the two organizations carry out their parallel missions to champion craft.

thebalvenie.com

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See how easy it is to make craft part your living space at our home décor exhibition, "Make Room: Modern Design Meets Craft." With this year's theme, "4 Elements," interior designers create room vignettes inspired by select pieces of fine craft that express one of Mother Nature's awe-inspiring elements—earth, air, fire, or water. Here's a look at the stylish settings you'll see on site. Mother Nature would be proud.



EARTH

Designer

Debra Herdman, Allied ASID

Design firm

Debra Herdman Design
debraherdmandesign.com

Inspirations

- 1 Matt Kelleher
mattkelleher.com
- 2 3 Willie Willette
williewilletteworks.com

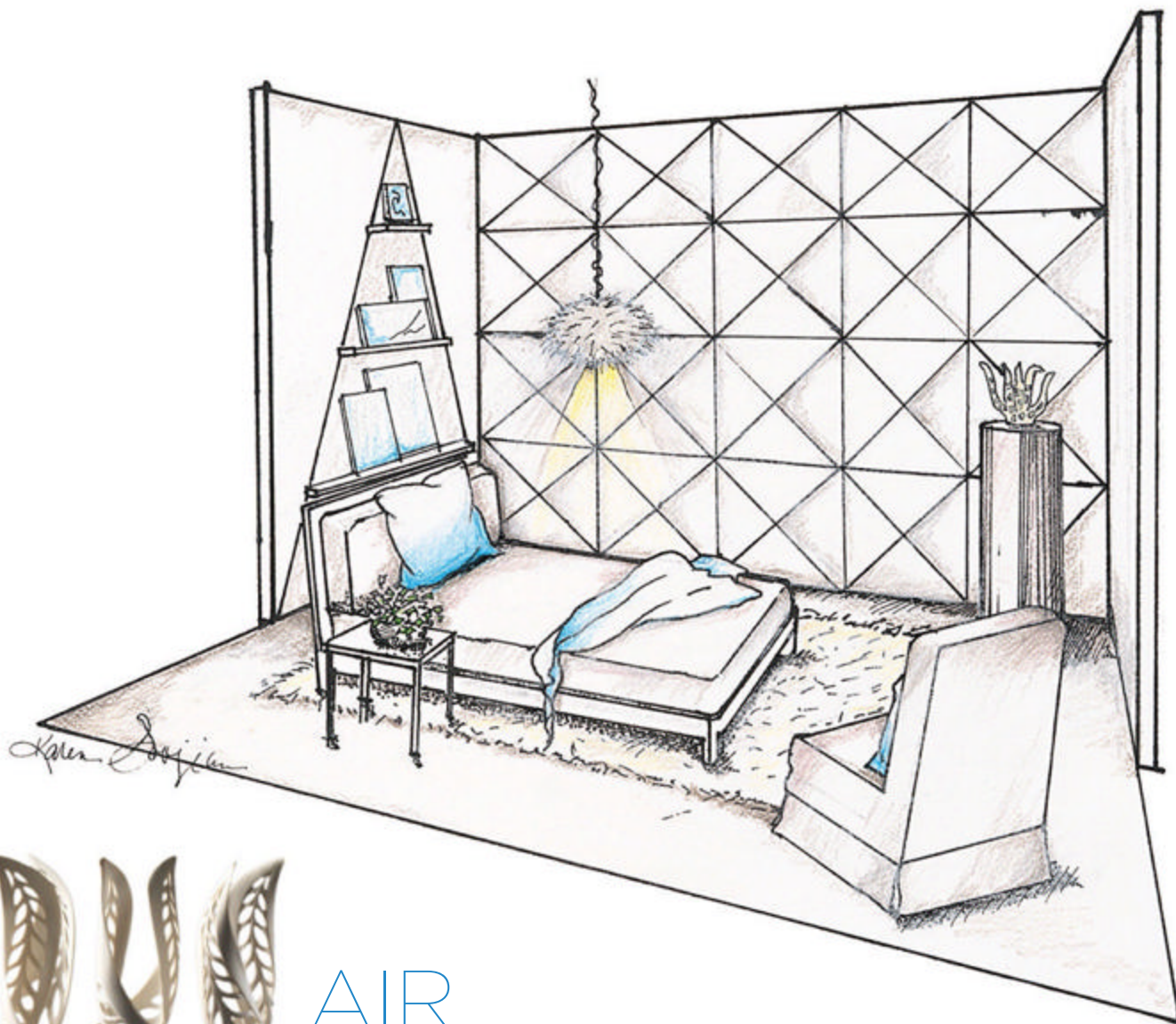
Design style

Function—of a room, a piece of furniture, or a decorative object—is important. I look for pieces that have multiple uses. A room that can be used for many activities, a bench that can work indoors or out, or a vase that can hold flowers or paint brushes are necessary elements of our daily lives, especially as we downsize and choose to live with less. I use natural elements as much as possible. I like to mix different styles and believe that useful handmade items are necessary to add depth and character to every home.

Vision

For me, earth conjures images of the natural world—sun, warm soil, spring growth, forests, animals, mountains, prairies. I envision an earthy interior as solid and substantial, but fresh and composed of colors found in nature. The inspired ways that artists and craftspeople manipulate natural elements into forms of beauty for our daily lives—here, a wood bench by Willie Willette and a ceramic piece by Matt Kelleher—allow an unlimited range of rich design opportunities.





2

AIR

Designer

Karen Soojian, ASID

Design firm

KSID Studio
ksidstudio.com

Inspirations

- 1 Earlene McNeil Larson
recycledfiberbyearl@yahoo.ca
- 2 Jennifer McCurdy
jennifermccurdy.com

Design style

I develop individual design concepts for each of my clients. I often start with textiles, since they inspire my selection of colors and finishes. Currently, I am drawn to romantic, organic style, which I achieve by mixing natural forms, finishes, and materials with a touch of glamour.

Vision

Air is often seen as a pure substance. To reflect the purity of air, I employed a palette of crisp white with a touch of sky blue. The ancient universal symbol of air, the equilateral triangle, inspired the use of the triangular shapes in the vignette.

The wheel-thrown porcelain vessel by Jennifer McCurdy is the perfect counterpoint to the angles in the space. I love how the curves of her piece capture how air moves through and around nature. The light, airy texture of Earlene McNeil Larson's paper art enchants me. The piece echoes the freshness of the color scheme.



1





WATER

Designer

Lucy Penfield, Allied ASID

Design firm

Lucy Interior Design
lucyinteriordesign.com

Inspiration

❶ Fred Kaemmer
fredsglass.com

Design style

Interior design is an invitation to experience the world from a bold, fresh perspective. Passionate about art, architecture, travel, and fashion, we use boundless creativity to think outside of the box and design exciting, inviting spaces layered with color, personality, and attitude.

Vision

After discovering the work of artist Fred Kaemmer, we were inspired to celebrate the mysterious beauty of ice. Using Fred's incredible glass pieces, along with metallic finishes, elegant bare trees, and modular furniture, we created a captivating and tantalizing frozen world. More than a room, this space is an experience, an invitation to pause and inhale the crisp, cold, frozen state of water.





FIRE

Designers

Jaqueline Bethke team, Allied ASID

Design firm

Jaqueline Bethke Pure Design
puredesignlife.com

Inspirations

- ① David Royce
davidroyceglass.com
- ② Aaron Baigelman
baigelmanglass.com
- ③ Josephine A. Geiger
jageigerstudio.com

Design style

Good design provides people a special sense of place, of self, and of the present. It should heighten one's sense of humor, serenity, mystery, and comfort. Our experience in residential and commercial design, as well as engineering, allows us to bring a comprehensive approach to our clients' unique design challenges.

Vision

This constantly moving and flowing source of energy consumes the imagination. As the hearth once long ago drew families together for stories, music, and heat, fire is still capable today of doing the same. A space designed with this tension between static luxury and dynamic involvement will delight guests. As fire illuminates this room with dramatic movement, color, and sculptural art, this energy is again invoked in modern times.



PROMOTION

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As you browse the aisles, you'll notice pop-up pods dotting the show floor. Each pod features six emerging artists and work that's brand-new to the ACC shows. You'll find contemporary pieces, from sophisticated elegance to cutting edge, at a variety of price points. **Be sure to check out the pod curated by Forage Modern Workshop showcasing top emerging Minnesota designers.**

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www.NewHopelnWood.com



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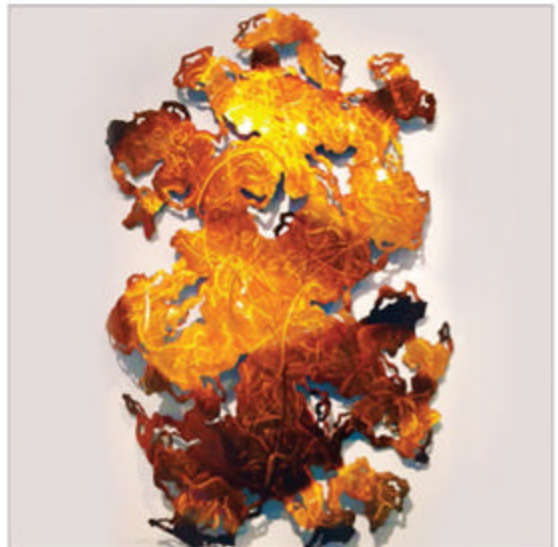
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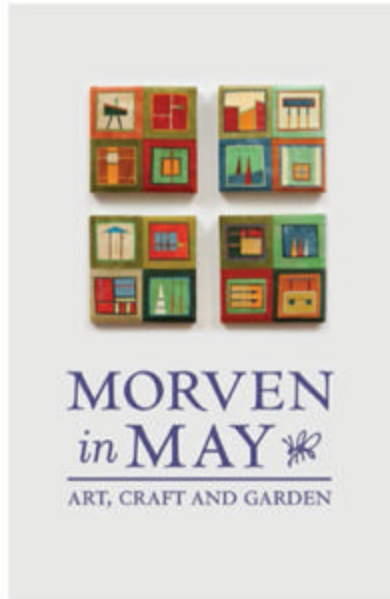
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A Funding Source

This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support grant, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

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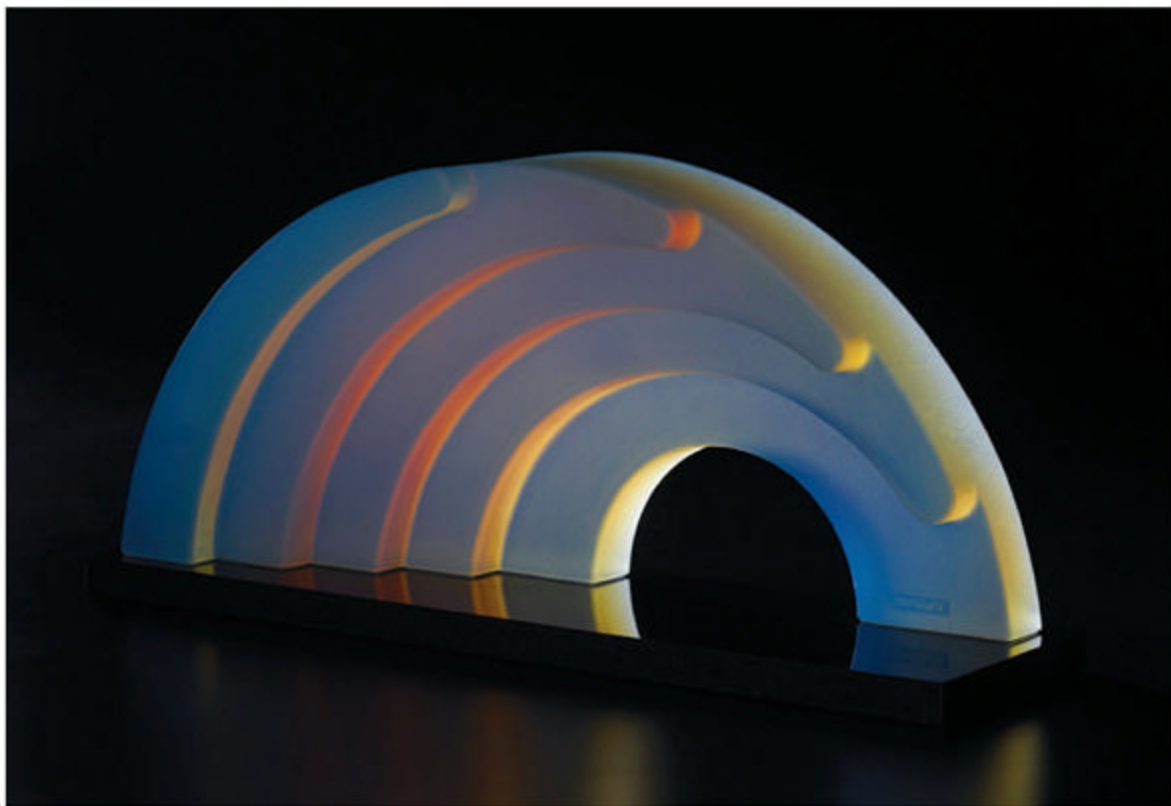
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Steve Mann



Steve Mann

ABOVE:
Passage 5, 2014,
hot-cast phase-separated
glass, cast-glass base,
34.9 x 16.1 x 8.75 in.

LEFT:
Passage 3, 2013,
hot-cast phase-separated
glass, granite base,
14.1 x 30.2 x 8.2 in.

BELOW:
Section One, Veils,
Palomar series, 2009,
hot-cast phase-separated
glass, MDF base,
22.25 x 11 x 11 in.

The Sky Is No Limit

*Glass artist
Mark Peiser's
career is
defined by
innovation.*

STORY BY
Jessica Shaykett

"THE KEY-NOTE, THE STANDARD of scale, and the chief organ of sentiment." That's how landscape painter John Constable described the sky nearly 200 years ago – a description, Mark Peiser says, that still resonates today. For more than 40 years, Peiser has experimented with equipment, materials, and processes in a quest to capture in glass the transparency and luminosity of the sky. For the contemplative artist, this lifelong exploration also raises philosophical questions.

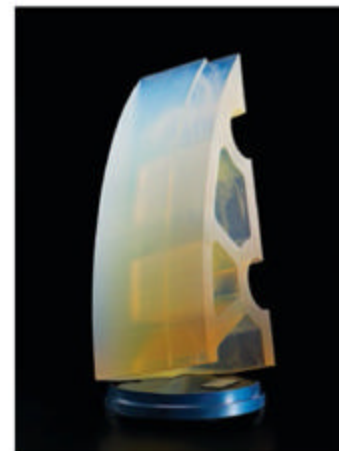
"If you think about it, the form of a sculpture of the sky presents some problems. Like, have you ever seen one? Like, where are the edges?"

Challenges of interpretation and representation only fuel Peiser, who works in blown, kiln-cast, and hot-cast glass. "My pieces all begin with a feeling in my gut. Then I think about it, identify it, visualize it, make sketches and models.

Sometimes all that comes together into what I think would be a worthwhile piece. Sometimes that takes over a year. Sometimes never."

In the case of opal glass, a technically enigmatic material, the artist has wrestled inveterately with the visual possibilities. (The glass refracts light in unpredictable ways, so anticipating the perceived color of an object once it comes out of the annealer is a gamble.)

Peiser began his Palomar series in 2007, inspired by the creation in 1948 of what was then the world's largest optical telescope. For four years the artist tackled modern-day iterations of the technical boundaries his predecessors experienced six decades prior. As Peiser advanced his tests and formulas, he was pleasantly surprised to find that in spite of opalized glass' inscrutable nature, several "failed" works conveyed great beauty. ("I approach



Steve Mann

just about everything as an experiment. Frequently I have no idea what to expect. Sometimes I get lucky," the artist notes.) One such piece, *Section One, Veils*, was quickly acquired by the Corning Museum of Glass for its permanent collection.

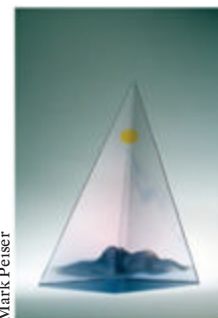
Peiser's inquisitiveness goes back to a childhood spent devouring *Popular Mechanics* magazines, mastering the

Steve Mann



Etude Tableau 1, 2012, hot-cast phase-separated glass, granite base, 16.25 x 22.75 x 6 in.

BELOW:
Muse in Mist II, Inner Space series, 1991, compound cast glass, 12.9 x 10.2 x 3.75 in.



Mark Peiser

construction potential of Erector sets, and exploring the great outdoors around his family's Chicago-area home. His analytical nature propelled him through successful early careers in industrial design and model making, which he boldly abandoned in 1965 to enroll at DePaul University and pursue his dream of studying music.

After two years, however, Peiser realized he wasn't cut out for life as a full-time pianist. Knowing he loved hands-on work, he headed in 1967 to North Carolina's burgeoning Penland School of Crafts for a five-week class in glass. There, he quickly acquainted himself with the basic tools and limited written resources available at the time. "I was told there was no information available beyond what I saw," he says.

"I found the only way to learn was through experimentation in all aspects of studio existence."

And experiment he did.

Peiser was made Penland's first resident glass craftsman, a post he held until 1970, when he established his own studio nearby. "Most of my career has been spent evolving glasses and processes," Peiser says. "Like many of us in the '60s, I strove to be an advocate for the material and new approaches to its objects."

For Peiser, elected to the American Craft Council College of Fellows in 1988, curiosity has no limit. Recently he referenced his musical past for his *Etude Tableau* series, the title a nod to composer Sergei Rachmaninoff. These works, along with his concurrent *Passages* series, consider how the sky transmits a hue through refraction. In Peiser's work, different thicknesses of glass convey the varying hues and volumes of colored light, creating visual presence in the material.

"In my head I think of this material as imbuing the space of



Mark Peiser

glass with atmosphere, not emptiness," Peiser says. "If it were music, it perhaps establishes a key signature for the piece. Somehow these glasses and how they deal with light resonate within me, and I yearn for them to be part of my vocabulary."

✦

markpeiser.com

Jessica Shaykett is the American Craft Council librarian.

Mountain Skyscape, Inner Space series, 1998, compound cast glass, 8.3 x 16.9 x 2.9 in.

WIDE WORLD OF CRAFT

Tel Aviv

Cr Metro



*Contemporary craft thrives in
a city with a rhythm all its own.*

after polis

STORY BY
Davira S. Taragin
with Aviva Ben-Sira

TEL AVIV IS HOME to sun-drenched white beaches and blue-green waters, more than 4,000 Bauhaus-style buildings, and a modern skyline dotted

with boutique hotels and towering office buildings. Amid it all, the city hosts a thriving art scene, where contemporary crafts, particularly jewelry and fiber, stand out.

For textile designer Mika Barr, the city is “a kind of creative and cultural center. It has the rhythm that I really like. I can find suppliers and professionals anywhere, but the unique feeling of the city – that is pretty hard to find.”

Crafts have played a significant role in Israel. Artist Boris Schatz founded Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts in Jerusalem in 1906 to encourage a unique Jewish aesthetic. The fashion house Maskit, founded in 1954 by Ruth Dayan, incorporated traditional jewelry, clothing, and home furnishings by skilled artisans into updated designs, which were sold throughout

Israel and abroad. Shenkar College of Engineering, Design and Art was founded in 1970 to help Israeli industry develop new technologies and products. And in 2001, Bezalel (now called Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design) opened a new branch – in Tel Aviv – to house its graduate programs in fine arts and photography.

Because of conflict with neighboring countries and internal tensions, Israeli makers have not always received the attention they deserve in their own country. Many Tel Aviv makers work from studios where they see clients by appointment only, relying heavily on the internet for exposure. Charles and the late Andrea Bronfman – who witnessed firsthand the declining crafts market during the second intifada – founded AIDA (the Association of Israel’s Decorative Arts) in 2003, with Dale and Doug Anderson, to bolster artists’ visibility. [See “Cross-Cultivation in Israel,” Jun./Jul. 2012.] The organization’s work now includes sponsoring Israeli participation in US museum, craft, and gallery exhibitions.

North Tel Aviv

NORTH TEL AVIV, LARGELY a luxury residential district, is home to the Eretz Israel Museum, an active supporter of Israeli crafts. Beginning in 1998, this museum initiated a contemporary jewelry biennial; biennials followed in ceramics, glass, paper, and this year, a survey of contemporary textiles. Its shop has the most extensive inventory, especially of jewelry, of Tel Aviv museums.

Eretz Israel Museum



Central Tel Aviv

CENTRAL TEL AVIV REMAINS the hub for quality crafts and design. At its heart is the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, with its modern and contemporary Israeli and international holdings. Since 2008, it has organized an exhibition for the annual winner of the Andrea M. Bronfman Prize for Contemporary Crafts, known as the “Andy,” established in 2005 by Charles Bronfman to recognize excellence in Israeli jewelry, ceramics, textiles, glass, and fashion.

Nearby is Litvak Gallery, which opened in 2008. Among Israel’s most prominent



Tel Aviv aerial photo: Paul Chesley, *National Geographic*, Getty Images / Eretz photos (2): Leonid Padrol, courtesy of Eretz Israel Museum

LEFT: Visitors take a gander inside *Lightfall*, the 87-foot, spiralling atrium of the Herta and Paul Amir Building at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art.

Yigal Pardo



Gali Cnaani's work is influenced by two years of traditional textile study in Japan.

galleries, it represents major glass artists; it is open by appointment only while it prepares to move to a new location.

The neighborhood is also home to notable design galleries, including Talents Design and Periscope. Periscope, established in 1997, augmented its design shows with craft exhibitions several years ago, and it now focuses on work that blurs the boundaries of craft and design. Designer Kedem Sasson has his primary showroom of flowing women's fashions on Dizengoff Street, one of Israel's most popular shopping areas; he also maintains a small gallery in South Tel Aviv.

Many internationally renowned artists also live in

this district. Recognized for her innovative Soma lamps, Ayala Serfaty is excited to be working here after maintaining a studio for many years in a large South Tel Aviv warehouse. "It has been my super wish to live and work in the center of Tel Aviv from an early age," she says. Similarly, acclaimed bead maker Nirit Dekel, whose colorful jewelry reflects the vitality of the city, mines her surroundings for ideas: "Living in the center of Tel Aviv reflects my personality, and, of course,

influences my work. The intense life, the bright sun, and colorful people are inspiration to me." Gali Cnaani, known for deconstructing and reconstructing traditional clothing, shares a space with textile artists Shiri Cnaani and Moshe Roas. Roas also uses deconstructed materials, such as burnt and disintegrating fabric and metal.

Central Tel Aviv additionally is home to talented jewelers such as Liat Ginzburg, Dania Chelminsky (whose work was a sensation at the 2013 "Loot" show at New York's Museum of Arts and Design), and Gregory Larin.

While some Israeli art jewelers use inexpensive, industrial materials, gold remains a staple. Noteworthy goldsmiths include Anat Gelbard, whose jewelry references ancient textiles and architectural detailing; and Shay and Adi Lahover, whose shop, near Sasson's showroom, features interpretations of traditional Middle Eastern motifs.



Dania Chelminsky makes jewelry using gold and pearls, plus occasionally eggshell and even plant roots.

Contemporary handmade fashion accessories are another highlight of the area. Gelbard, who also designs accessories, offers shoes and handbags with unusual materials such as felt, sterling-silver leaf, and crystals. Accessories by the design house of Daniella Lehavi, the first Israeli designer to offer custom handbag designs, are available in her Rothschild Boulevard boutique. Elsewhere in the neighborhood, Kisim features soft, unstructured bags and wallets handmade in leather and fabric.



Courtesy of Daniella Lehavi Personals PR

ABOVE: The Daniella Lehavi boutique on iconic Rothschild Boulevard.

LEFT: Tel Aviv Museum of Art's Amir Building.

Neve Tzedek

NEVE TZEDEK, IN SOUTHWESTERN Tel Aviv, is the modern city's oldest neighborhood. Known as an artists' and writers' quarter in the early 20th century, it fell into neglect until gentrification in the 1980s brought upscale restaurants and shops. Although escalating costs have forced out some shops, many makers call it home, including jeweler Ayala Bar, who uses glass beads, nonprecious stones, and rhinestones in her exuberant work, and the Shlush Shloshim Contemporary Ceramics Gallery, a cooperative that features 11 ceramists with work ranging from Yael Novak's functional wares to Hannah Miller's whimsical sculptures.

South Tel Aviv

AN INDUSTRIAL WASTELAND until the 1990s, South Tel Aviv is becoming home to artists who can't keep up with rising real estate prices in Central Tel Aviv and Neve Tzedek. Finding studio spaces in such complexes as the New Central Bus Station, a 1960s-era behemoth that is slowly being repurposed, they join Bezalel and Shenkar graduates and artisans from Africa, China, and Southeast Asia in an alternative art scene.

One of the area's anchors is the Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Center, which offers instruction for beginners and professionals alike. "When we opened in June 2011, there were



Shlush Shloshim gallery

four contemporary art galleries in the area," director Marcelle Klein notes. "Since then, another four galleries have opened, as well as the Shpilman Institute for Photography. Since we are in the area of contemporary art, ceramics is included in the circuit and we have received a lot of exposure, making the public aware of the broad spectrum of ceramics and its position in art, design, and craft."

Maskit, which closed in 1994, reopened last year in a restored building in South Tel Aviv's 150-year-old American Colony. Sharon and Nir Tal



The Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Center aims to spark in-depth discussion of ceramic art and design.

have spearheaded the revival, although Nir, its CEO, credits his wife, a former designer of embroidery at London's Alexander McQueen, as the driving force, noting her insistence that Israel have an international fashion house with a strong heritage. Maskit's showroom reflects the revitalized company's approach, offering updated versions of traditional designs.

Jaffa

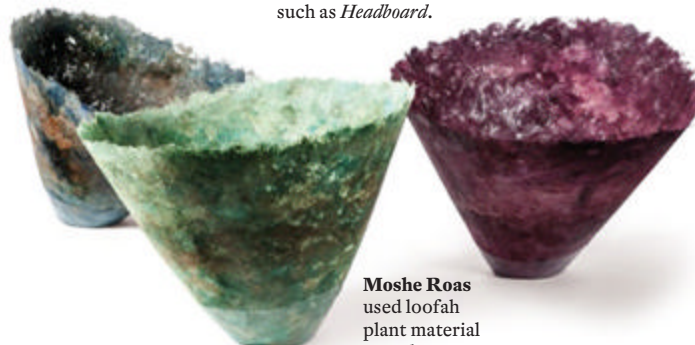
IN 1950, JAFFA AND TEL AVIV merged, officially becoming Tel Aviv-Yafo. This ancient port bordering South Tel Aviv is rapidly becoming another hot spot for contemporary craft and design. Home to design giants such as Yaacov Kaufman, and the team of Dov Ganchrow and the late Ami Drach, Jaffa also is home to a large population of traditionally trained immigrant artisans.

"Collectives of young and established Israeli craftsmen and designers are now springing up in Jaffa's well-known flea market alongside traditional stands filled with Arabic ceramics and metalwork and trendy restaurants," says Jaffa resident Dafna Kaffeman, who heads Bezalel's glass program in Jerusalem. "The young designers as well as those in the South Tel Aviv area collaborate with the immigrant artisans or with small local manufacturers. This is not seen in Central Tel Aviv."

Jaffa also has a number of small craft shops that double as studios. Yael Herman, a jeweler who has shown in American craft shows, closed her Central Tel Aviv gallery two years ago to design sandals in a



Lauri Recanati
frequently incorporates flea-market finds into her mosaics, such as *Headboard*.



Moshe Roas
used loofah plant material to make these vases.



Maskit's Toga dress, a classic design, was re-released in 2014.



Earrings from Anat Gelbard's Chameleon collection.



Shay Lahover's jewelry blends precious gems and gold.

Tel Aviv Craft Ways

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kedem-sasson.com

2 Haim Levanon St.
eretzmuseum.org.il

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12 Anne Frank St.
shenkar.ac.il

9. Ayala Bar
36 Shabazi St.
ayalabar.com

10. Shlush Shloshim gallery
31 Shabazi St.
shlushshloshim.com

6. Tel Aviv Museum of Art
27 Shaul Hamelech Blvd.
tamuseum.org.il

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11. Maskit
4 Auerbuch St.
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12. Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design
60 Salameh St.
bezalel.ac.il

13. Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Center
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Jaffa



Formerly curator at the Detroit Institute of Arts and Toledo Museum of Art, and director of exhibitions and programs at the Racine Art Museum, Davira S. Taragin is an independent curator. Aviva Ben-Sira is the director of AIDA.



Wooden clogs by Yael Herman reflect her Jaffa sea view.

studio/shop along the seashore. Similarly, Andy prizewinner Itay Noy, finding Jaffa "bountiful, inspiring, and welcoming to visitors from all over the world," has a studio/gallery where he creates limited-edition timepieces. Lauri Recanati, a mosaicist, chose to work there "because of all the treasures one can find in its flea market," which she incorporates into her work.

Collectives are adding a fresh approach, presenting works by groups of makers. Asufa, located in Jaffa's flea market, highlights young Israeli designers. The ceramics cooperative 8 in Jaffa is another such venture.

Whatever format prevails in Israel's marketplace in the future, one thing is certain: Tel Aviv is a city to watch.

from a TREE to a WEB

*Perhaps taking its cues
from nature, the art world
is becoming less hierarchical;
critics should take heed.*

ESSAY BY *William Warmus* COLLAGE BY *Paul Davis*

I HAVE BEEN WRITING ABOUT art since the 1970s, and for most of that time the art world seemed, from my point of view, fairly stable. In the first decade of this century, though, I sensed a change in the structure of the art world, from a hierarchical pattern to a reticulate one, from a tree to a web. This was happening most in the world of art expos and social media, and least in art criticism and the academic community, perhaps because the tenure system is hierarchical. Styles of art also changed, as they always have. But even there, it was evident that structural changes were taking place.

Traditional art criticism and history identify art styles from good to better to best: a tree pattern, reaching ever upward for those who follow the correct path. The progression toward increasing abstraction in the 20th century, from Picasso to Pollock, is an example of the tree structure. But if an artist followed the wrong path at the wrong time, he was

relegated to a lower branch, basically going nowhere. The exiling of realism as abstraction gained ground is one example: Who remembers Raphael Soyer?

And yet abstraction itself seemed to reach the far end of a limb with artists such as Morris Louis and Jules Olitski, just as a powerful new branch was flourishing, which combined abstraction with realism: pop art, Andy Warhol, and Jasper Johns. Mastering this system were the art critics and museum curators and dealers who “made taste,” people such as Clement Greenberg, Harold Rosenberg, Henry Geldzahler, and André Emmerich. They exercised hierarchical judgments when they selected individual artists to write about or exhibit.

That system worked to create the art world as we know it, or at least as it was at the end of the 20th century. And it was a pretty grand place to be, if you were in it. But there was a lot of suffering if you were not among the chosen artists – or mediums or class or gender or geographical region.

In the 21st century

I was lucky enough to be a part of that old art world as a writer and curator. But in 1997 I learned to scuba dive, and that changed my life as well as my understanding of art. Diving first on pristine coral reefs in Fiji, I encountered landscapes that were so unusual that I wanted to call them works of art rather than of nature. Unable to find much written about them from this point of

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view, I brought my critical skills to bear on the underwater world and embarked on a brief career as a critic of the ocean realm.

I slowly learned that the ocean realm is highly resistant to critical interpretation and that it was arrogant of me to assume that I could play such a role. Once I met the ocean with humility and abandoned my project of applying art theory to deep water, I began to learn that the ocean had much to teach me about aesthetics.

Diving on coral reefs from Tonga to Hawaii to Bonaire to Florida, I learned about a form of evolution that was different from the hierarchical, Darwinian one. It is called reticulate evolution, and although most of my knowledge about it comes from the work of J.E.N. Veron on coral reefs, some terrestrial life forms also evolve this way.

I decided to take up this theory metaphorically and apply it to art, combining it with other observations about underwater behavior. I coined a term to help me collect all that I had learned from diving and the ocean realm: “reticulate aesthetics.” This was the late 1990s, when the internet was beginning to have a real impact on the way we think about the world. So I was thinking a lot about nets and webs, both underwater and in cyberspace.

I especially like the way a web or reticulate structure in evolution allows for “species blending” and challenges the idea of individual species and unchangeable hierarchies. Similarly, reticulate aesthetics goes beyond traditional art history

as a history of individuals and discrete styles, seeing it instead as a history of collaboration and of blending.

This web pattern allows for cross-pollination of ideas and styles. It creates really excellent styles in places (e.g., glass, ceramics, metalworking) that under the tree structure never had any chance of ascending, styles that were always pushed to the side, relegated to a lower limb. And so reticulate aesthetics recognizes the potential value of all art. Our culture’s increasing willingness to look for art at the fringes (outsider art, art from materials such as dirt and urine, art that copies existing art) seems to be an example of this desire for cross-pollination.

That interconnectedness lends strength. As Moises Velasquez-Manoff wrote in the *New York Times* on interbreeding species, “Biodiversity has developed in a web of life rather than a tree of life.” The author used the pizzly bear, a blend of polar bear and grizzly bear, as an example of a stronger species that results from the web of biodiversity. (For further discussion, see *Reticulate Evolution and Humans* by Michael Arnold.)

So can we conclude that the reticulate model is replacing the hierarchical pattern in art? Maybe. But because power and money still rest with the tree structure – the winner-take-all paradigm that has been adopted by the contemporary art world – it is unlikely that the reticulate model will completely replace the hierarchy. Andy Warhol is not likely to be exhibited on

the same wall with Raphael Soyer anytime soon. But maybe we can hope that ceramics, glass, fiber, and metal will be integrated with painting and sculpture when the Metropolitan Museum displays its contemporary collection for the next few years in the space currently occupied by the Whitney Museum. In the meantime, let’s take a look at some of the strengths of reticulate aesthetics.

Craft is essential

In the old art world, mastering technique got you to a branch on the tree, and you could move around on that branch, but not up or down to another branch. Mastering painting meant you were a serious artist; mastering clay or glass meant you were a technician.

In the 21st century, I see technique as the essential entry point to a network. Everyone needs to master some technique: glass, writing, carpentry, filmmaking. This gives you an entry ticket. Once part of the web, you can move around as you wish (depending, of course, on ability, luck, money, and political connections). There are no longer truly distinct styles of art: They blend, appear, disappear, reappear, are repackaged. Fiber art becomes fine art. Abstract sculpture becomes abstract glass. Optical glass becomes minimalist sculpture. Handmade gives way to machine-made, which gives way to craft and DIY, which give way to 3D printing.

Visibility for mid-level artists?

The reach and affordability of social media mean that all artists have a chance of having their work seen. And if the art world is becoming more like a web than a tree, the artists we once called “mid-level” may be able to play on higher ground. The result could be

more artists who are happier and economically stable. The old economics of art presumed a correlation between aesthetic value and retail price, producing a graph that looked like a ramp: The higher up you went, the better and more costly the art. The legitimacy of that relationship was never proven. The new economics theoretically seeks ways to price art so the entire reticulate system thrives. Good art may have many different price points, and prices may change depending on a variety of influences.

Mimicry: It has its uses

This is one of my favorite ways underwater behavior applies to art theory. Mimicry is a behavior fish use to survive: A weak fish mimics the color and shape of a dangerous or poisonous one to scare off predators. Over the years, my position about copying has changed, because of my observations of mimicry. I now theorize that it is natural for weaker artists to mimic stronger ones in order to survive in the marketplace. That, for me, is reticulate aesthetics at work.

Kinder and gentler, but also messier

In this complicated, reticulated world, critics and art historians need to revise how they discuss art. We must recognize how messy everything gets, and rather than intimidate and discourage, we need to encourage even more messiness.

We should push for civility within the world of art criticism and art history for two reasons: First, because we need some basic rules of discourse that respect the gender, race, and level of wealth and education of everyone; and second, because we can benefit from observations about behavior such as mimicry, which puts

copyright infringement in a kinder, gentler light.

We need to tone down the endless bickering among critics and realize that the role of criticism in the 21st century is not to establish and support hierarchies, but to encourage the exponential growth of new art forms (and old art forms, too).

Encouraging new forms

Every artwork deserves our attention. But our time is limited. The idealistic task before criticism in the 21st century is to look at and appreciate all works of art everywhere. This is no longer a fantasy; with social media it is at least theoretically possible. We need to look at more art, encourage more art – not the other way around, as was the basis for 20th-century criticism: to discourage and narrow and elevate, to act with arrogant purpose.

From the viewpoint of reticulate aesthetics, everything is important and has a place. The key is to locate the place of each artwork and the direction of each style and map it all out, while realizing we all will produce different maps and nets. Of course, such a project is impossible, but it is possible for a nimble individual, working as part of a larger social media group, to help chart the art world in greater detail than it has ever been mapped before.

Reticulate aesthetics is developing in this context: It is admittedly utopian. We need to know everyone, look at every art object at SOFA Chicago, Art Miami, and Art Basel, give it its due and determine its place. We need to respect and employ the aesthetic positions of Charlotte Potter, Helen Lee, Glenn Adamson [“Reinvesting in the Mission,” Feb./Mar. 2014], Bruce Metcalf [“Hot Glue and Staples,” Jun./

Jul. 2014], Donald Kuspit, Hegel, Plato – everyone, every era.

Context, not rank

If we see the structure of art as a net or web rather than a hierarchy, the nature of judging changes, too. Judgments are no longer exclusively about good, better, or best, but rather about where in the web the artist and artwork fits. You judge in order to locate. The critic places art in a context, at a point on the web, and as part of a story. Distance and direction rule even for the critic.

Do we judge good and bad in a kinder, gentler system? I discovered a more respectful way to judge with a Facebook posting I made about my experiences at SOFA Chicago in November. I posted a series of handsome detail images of artworks that attracted my attention, and these produced many comments and much discussion. Among the social-media audience, we found ourselves judging and criticizing details, at times constructively, without criticizing the artists, and some viewers began to appreciate the work of artists they had previously dismissed. So the process of looking at details, really looking at them deeply, has become a new ally in my search for a kinder, gentler, and more satisfying criticism.

In the old art world, the hierarchical form of criticism was, I admit, very good at bringing closure: These are the 10 best objects from Art Basel. In the reticulate world, there is no closure. Every list of the best produces 10 more and 10 more. And on it goes.

✦
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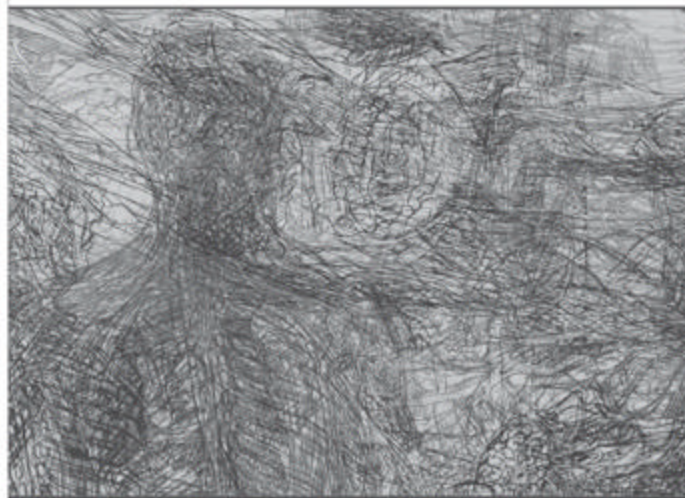
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Fragments 1, silkscreen print on polyester, 110 x 110 cm, 2013; photo: Istvan Zsako.



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Limited Aesthetica
(2011-15) contains a world of insects, yet measures a mere 13 inches across.

Love of Life

IN HUMAN RECKONING, INSECTS are a curious class of creature, observes Christopher Marley. They're among the most numerous life forms in the world, and yet, in their dizzying range of appearance and behavior, they seem the most alien, the most unknowable. Our interactions with them tend to be potent: Everyone has a bug story – and few are warm and fuzzy. And yet we're wired, in many ways, toward affection for the natural

world. To the Oregon artist, it just doesn't add up.

"If the work I do provides no other benefit than to kindle a new appreciation for insects (and any other creatures that evoke trepidation in the human heart), that is enough for me," Marley writes in the introduction to his new book, *Biophilia*, published by Abrams. The title is a term coined by a philosopher to describe "the passionate love of life and all that is alive." The

idea is at the heart of Marley's work. For more than 15 years, he has tenderly arranged responsibly collected insects (as well as animals, plants, and minerals) into mandalas, geometric groupings, and other striking displays.

What has he learned? Design matters. Taking insects out of their expected contexts and arranging them to emphasize their aesthetic qualities reboots our perceptions. For many people, his work is a gateway,

"just as random musical notes, once properly orchestrated, can enter the heart and sway it almost against our volition." The *Limited Aesthetica* is a favorite: an architectural array of beetles, wasps, butterflies, moths, bees, and flies that unapologetically celebrates the natural bling of the bug world. Even *Metalliticus splendidus* – a member of the world's only metallic mantis family – makes an appearance.

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TOP: Joe Lendway '15, Lotus Table,
ash, black walnut, rubbed graphite,
plexiglass, fish hooks, 36" d x 18" h, 2014

LEFT: Kate Harnden '15, Sea Scarf,
American wool





Jamie Walker, *Brocca*, 2014, 8 x 13 x 6" photo: courtesy of the artist

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